Stars and Creations at the Festivals

Dance and Dancers

OCTOBER 1957

This month's full ballet guide

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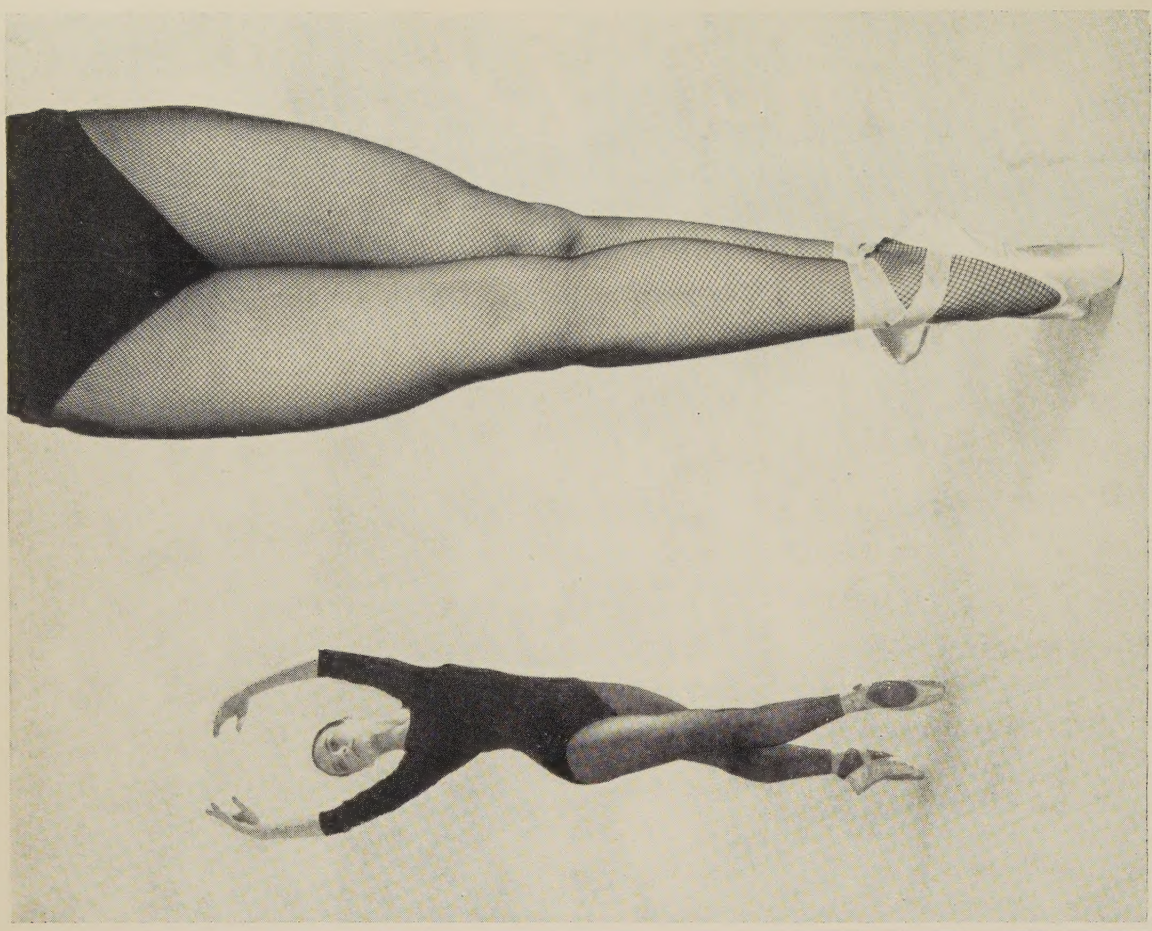

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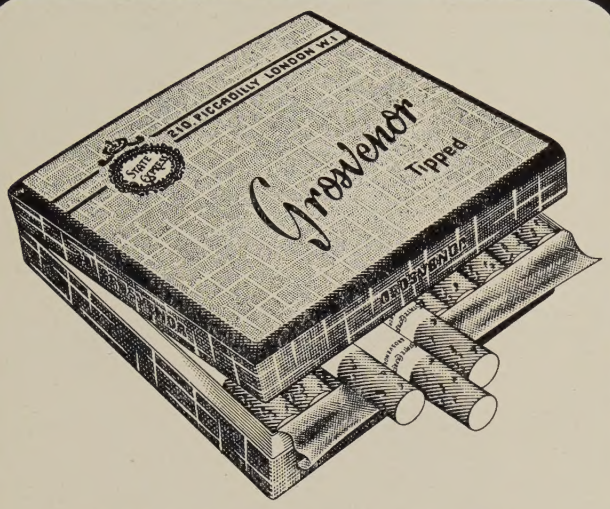

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Dame Ninette has just written her autobiography—a story all ballet-lovers will want to read. It is being serialised, beginning on September 29, exclusively in

THE SUNDAY TIMES

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Personality of the month

PILAR LOPEZ *Photo: Gyenes*

"IF I am not the greatest Spanish dancer, then who is?" a famous Iberian star once shrieked at me in answer to a slight criticism. It is possible that the greatest Spanish dancer has not yet been discovered and is still beating heart and heel out in the caves of Granada. But for sheer style in all facets of Spain's dance art, there are few who can compare today with Pilar Lopez, the sister of the late and always lamented La Argentinita. She has restored to the dance of Spain a nobility and controlled excitement which has been the hallmark of her sisters-in-dance through the centuries. Her influence on the newer generation has been profound, as her recent season at London's Palace Theatre so emphatically proved.

Pilar Lopez returned to London with a virtually new company. The only male dancer who had been with her on previous visits was Antonio Gadez and his rapid ascendance to stardom, through the Lopez training and influence, has been one of the minor miracles of the dance year. But on the others, who had only been in the company for a few months, that stamp was equally obvious.

As in all branches of theatrical dancing, it is the person reaching great heights as a performer who becomes the finest teacher and the greatest influence. During this recent Palace season Pilar Lopez danced better than ever before. Like Alicia Markova she defies the years and acquires a mature authority which opens the eyes of public and critic alike as to what the heights really look like. Such artists provide the yardstick by which to judge all others in their respective branches of the art of dance. Pilar Lopez had but to point a foot or raise her perfectly placed arms in the gay *Wedding of Luis Alonso* for the audience to realise that they were seeing something that was essentially Spain. The same could be said of her flamenco *Soleares* and *Siguiryas*, for here was all the aristocracy and passion that centuries of gypsy dancers have passed on to us. The outstanding success of this month-long season proves that London is at last learning where the real truth lies. The stamping, shouting and tumbling hair of some Spanish companies will always excite certain audiences, but in the end it is the more sober rightness, which is no whit less exciting, that we shall remember with gratitude.

October 1957 8th YEAR OF PUBLICATION Vol. 8 No. 10

Dance and Dancers

Editor: PETER WILLIAMS *Assistant Editor:* CLIVE A. BARNES

WORLD'S LARGEST SALE IN THE FIELD

New Heart Beats in Midlothian

TWO months ago, in this column, I deplored the fact that while the dance festivals of Europe were doing everything in their power to create new ballets, in the British Isles we were just sitting back like wallflowers and taking no part. Now, as if in immediate answer to an R.S.V.P., comes back the Edinburgh Festival with a most heartening plan for their next year's Festival. Instead of the usual tour of international companies next year, the heart of Midlothian will see no less than 12 creations all specially commissioned by the Festival. Famous choreographers from different countries—Britain, America, France, Germany and Scandinavia among others—have been invited to mount new ballets and to bring two star dancers with each of them. A small group will be formed to provide soloists and *corps de ballet*. Michael Frostick will be artistic director, Peggy Van Praagh dance director, Charles Mackerras musical director and Michael Manuel stage director.

This season should act as a complement to Aix-les-Bains, which is concentrating on young less-tried choreographers, for in Edinburgh the choreographers will all be well-established names. If this policy is continued it might be possible that in future years the French festival can act as a "feed" to the Scottish one. The main thing is that a British festival has realised one of the prime functions of these occasions by placing the accent on creation rather than on inadequate reproduction. Perhaps this early announcement of a policy for next year will influence all other plans for festivals in Britain and the mainland of Europe. If it does, then here is the answer to the crying need in every country—a choreographers' workshop. At last the choreographer can be provided with the stage which both state-run and commercial companies have been unable to provide mainly for economic reasons.

Though I don't wish in any way to throw water on the Edinburgh plan—not one tiny drop of it—I am slightly worried by the lack of provision made, if preliminary announcements are correct, for designers. It should never be forgotten that the designer has become an integral part of the art of ballet and his co-operation is vital to the whole. Designers need a stage as much as do choreographers, so surely they should be included in this otherwise wholely admirable plan. Christian Bérard used to create miracles of beauty in ballet with the most limited means and there is no reason why others should not do the same without Edinburgh being too many bawbies out of pocket.

Scotland's capital has set itself a most difficult task, the immensity of which it is possibly not entirely aware itself. But whatever the result, a blow has been struck in the right direction and we should do everything in our power to see that it meets with the success that all such bravery deserves.

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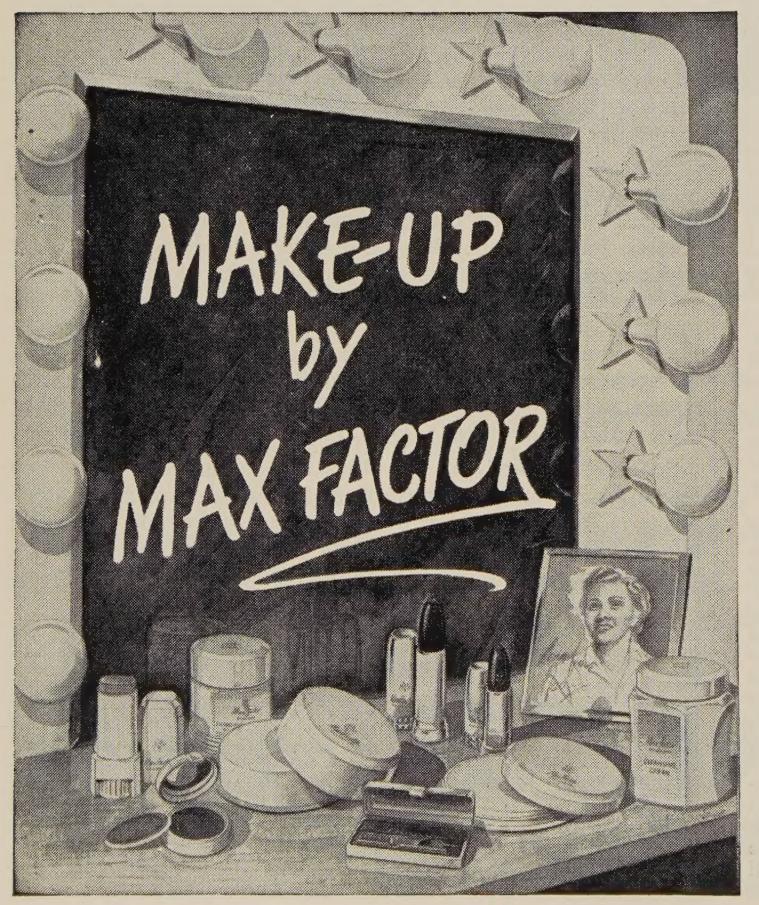

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MONKEY KING: This figure is already familiar to London audiences from the last visit of a Chinese company. He is a well-known figure in the Chinese theatre.

SHENG AND TAN: Leading stock characters in Chinese classical theatre. Tan is always a beautiful and virtuous lady, while Sheng is always an honest gentleman.

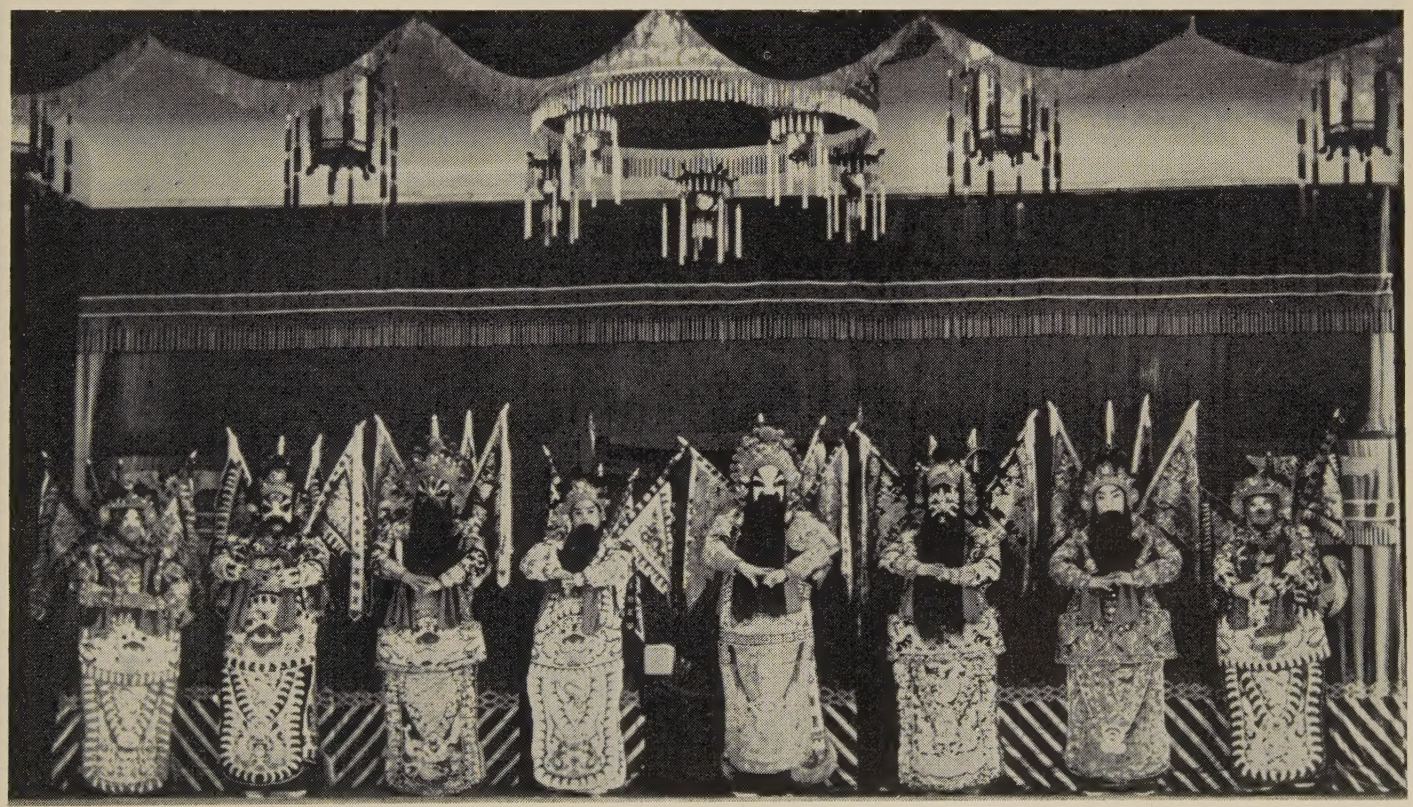
YOUNG ENTRY: Chinese players are trained from early childhood. Here are three teen-age students depicting a pair of young men making eyes at each other after having fought a duel.

Chinese Classical Theatre

THE term "Theatre" or "Opera," which forms part of the title of these companies from China is possibly rather misleading, specially to a dance public who tend to wonder whether it all has any interest for them. The fact is that dance-movement and mime are an integral part of the Chinese theatre. For a Western audience, which is unlikely to understand whole operas and theatre pieces in Chinese, the passages which show the most dancing have been selected because dance is one of the most universal languages. What Britain saw when the company from Pekin appeared at the Palace Theatre in London two years ago really amounted to a ballet performance more than anything else. The movement and the colour of the magnificent costumes provided one of the most exotic dance spectacles in the theatre which London has seen for many years.

Again Peter Daubeny is bringing a Classical Theatre company from China—this time to Drury Lane—and the new company is really the original one from Pekin which now has its headquarters in Formosa.

EIGHT GENERALS: Chinese classical theatre is not, like in the West, divided into tragedies and comedies, but into literary plays and military plays. Here the generals start the performance by introducing themselves in the prelude to a military play, a feature of which is the great acrobatic skill needed.



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RAISIN' CANE: *Members of the New York Negro Ballet in a dance from* Raisin' Cane *which concerns a village boy visiting New Orleans for the first time. His money is taken from him by typical characters; in the end they relent and the money is returned.* *Photo: Bruno*

Negroes in Ballet

"NEGROES in ballet! How absurd!" many people will probably mutter when they hear about the New York Negro Ballet which Peter Daubeny is now presenting in the British provinces prior to a London season and a continental tour. But, why absurd? Negroes have a greater sense of natural rhythm and of movement than almost any other of this earth's peoples. There is no reason why this natural talent should not be disciplined into ballet form rather than into a lot of cabaret numbers.

Ward Flemyng had this idea some years ago, and he found that several other Negroes also wanted to dance this way. He owes a great deal to his early teacher, Maria Nevelska, who thought very much on the same lines as himself. The next step was to form a company and with five dancers he started the company in New York, while Joseph Richard formed another group on the West Coast. The two companies supported each other. The start was slow, but by taking other engagements at the same time they managed to keep together.

The aim of the company is not to confine its work to classical dance but to use it so that it can combine this tradition with the rich Negro heritage and develop a dance art that uses the Negroes' particular flair and talent. It is a formidable task, but its success should add new vitality to ballet as a whole. It has meant a great deal of sacrifice on the part of the two dozen dancers who form the New York Negro Ballet, for they have had to give up lucrative jobs elsewhere in order to prove that they can dance as a ballet company.

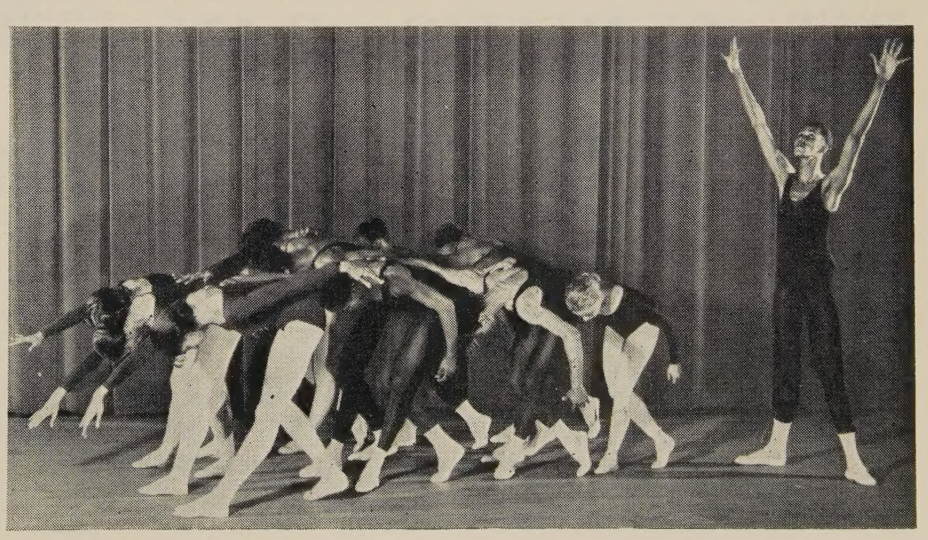
The repertoire they show is varied, ranging as it does from *Rhapsody*, to Brahms music, and *Waltz*, to Lecocq music from *Mlle. Angot*, to *Folk Impressions*, to Morton Gould music, and a typical *Mardi Gras* carnival divertissement. Works with a story include *Raisin' Cane*, about New Orleans in the 'thirties, and *Harlot's House* based on the Oscar Wilde poem.

The two artistic directors, Ward Flemyng and Theodore Hancock, aim at recruiting famous choreographers, composers and designers to build up their repertoire. Already a start has been made with Jack Carter, who is working on *Harlot's House*.

Those who have got used to the Negro "shows" which England has seen since the *Blackbirds* revues of the 'twenties may have to adjust their ideas somewhat, but New York Negro Ballet amounts to a sincere attempt at establishing the Negro as an important contributor to the art of ballet as a whole.

WALTZ (*above*): *Dancers in a classical work set to one of Lecocq's waltzes from* Mlle. Angot.

FOLK IMPRESSIONS (*below*): *An abstract work, to Morton Gould music, which uses typical Negro rhythms. Most of the costumes used in these works have been designed by Bernard Johnson, who is one of the principal dancers in the company. The new settings have been designed by an English designer, Richard Lake.* *Photos: Bruno*



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Whatever the pleasure, Player's complete it.

IT'S THE TOBACCO THAT COUNTS

[NCC 176]

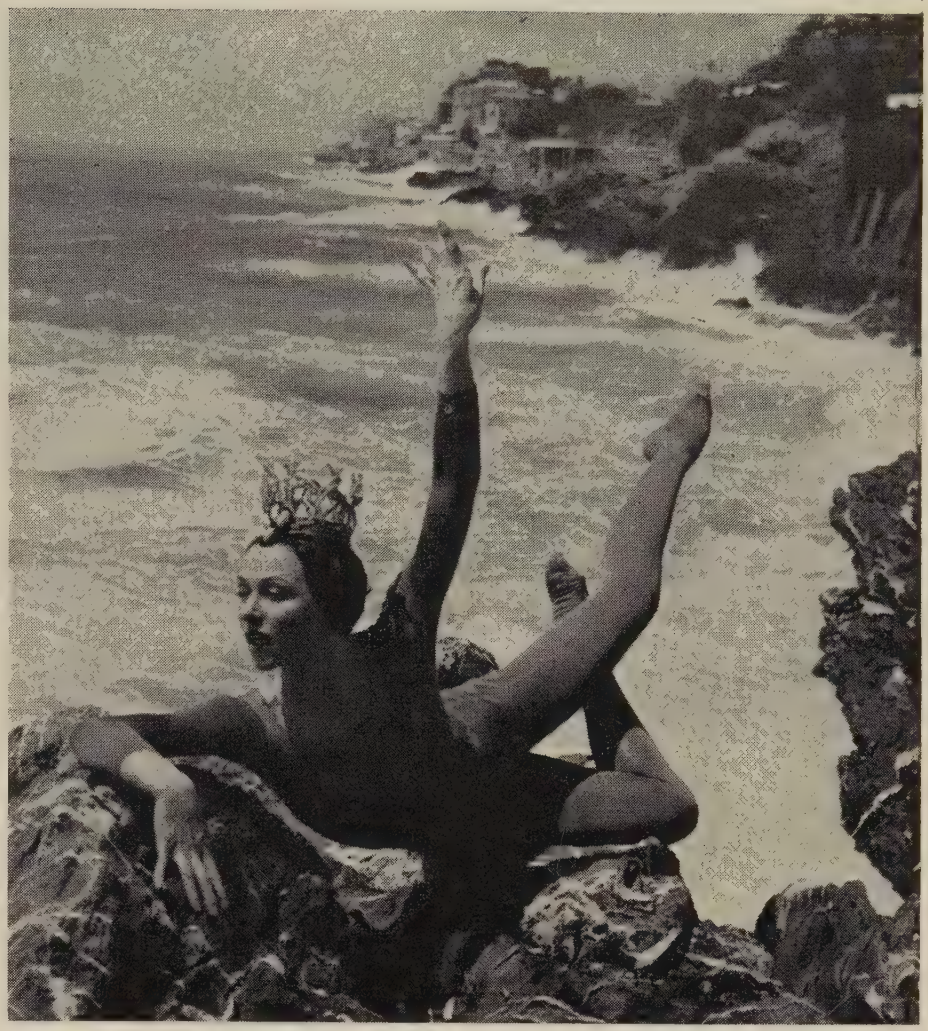
The Great Outdoors

International stars at the third Festival of Nervi in Genoa

by ***PETER WILLIAMS***

FOR over three years, Mario Porcile has built up the Festival of Nervi into one of the most important international dance festivals. In the past two seasons have appeared the Azuma Kabuki company from Japan, the Royal Swedish Ballet, the Hungarian Dance Company, the Indian Ballet of Ram Gopal, Le Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas and the ballet from La Scala, Milan. In addition there have been concert performances by Alicia Markova and Milorad Miskovitch, Harald Kreutzberg, Kovach and Rabovsky, among others.

For the third festival, Porcile planned a spectacle which would bring together some of the most famous international ballerinas. As a result Dolin's reconstruction of the famous *Pas de Quatre* of 1845 formed the centre piece of this year's festival with Markova as the Italian Taglioni, Chauviré as the French Grisi, Schanne as the Danish Grahn and Fracci as the Italian Cerrito.



SPIRIT OF THE SEA: Genoa is a centre of maritime activity. The sea has brought it prosperity. As the sea sprite from Lifar's ballet, Nautéos, *Chauviré poses on the rocks of Nervi. One of the items she danced on the opening night of the 1957 festival was in the* pas de deux *from this ballet.*

Photo: Lido

GENOA is not the easiest place to get to in a hurry now that the flying-boat service has been suspended—or perhaps I just had bad luck. For most of one day I bumped about in the air strapped to my seat, missed connections at Milan and arrived at Nervi in a pulp-like state about fifteen hours after having set out from London. The rain teemed down and the waves lashed up the rocks to a height which reminded me more of a wild winter's night on the north coast of Cornwall. Not at all the Italy I knew.

Next morning, July 20 and the opening day of the festival, all had changed. The sun shone brilliantly on an ultramarine sea though the waves were still slightly unruly. Bronzed and beautiful Italian girls and boys (no aged Italians were ever visible) lay around on the rocks like a happy colony of seagulls. The ballerinas and their partners sat around under the trees of the Hotel Vittoria laughing, eating and relaxing before the evening's performance. This relaxed feeling is one of the remarkable features of this festival and Dolin told me that all the rehearsals had gone through in this friendly manner. A minor disturbance was caused when a local reporter arrived to interview Madame Taglioni. He was most disconcerted when he was told she had died; he seemed to think that she had died that morning and that as a result the festival would have to be postponed.

The park of Nervi, about six kilometres along the coast east of Genoa, once belonged to a noble family. Today it is a public park and makes an imposing setting for large ballet companies. The stage is flanked by huge palm trees and pines, and mainly uses the Ligurian night sky for its backcloth. The theatre itself is a masterpiece of construction with a stage of the dimensions to accommodate a full-size ballet company without making it look cramped; behind, on a lower level, are terraces of dressing rooms. Unlike most open-air theatres, Nervi boasts of a sliding wooden curtain which conceals any scene-changes.

At night the park is transformed into a world of magic. In order to approach the auditorium it is necessary to wander down mysterious paths bordered by trees and bushes floodlit with subtle green lighting. The auditorium itself seems immense and holds about 4,000 people. The chairs have been painted red or yellow so that they are bright and gay even when unoccupied. Not that there were ever many unoccupied during the festival and the audience which sat on them was very well dressed. On the opening night it was also very well behaved, considering that it had waited for over half an hour longer than the scheduled curtain time on account of a Eurovision TV relay due to take place at 10 o'clock. To make a prelude to *The Pas de Quatre*, a work was created called:

Ouverture per la Regine

Choreography by Ugo Dell'Ara. Music Franz Liszt.

with GIULIANA BARABASCHI and pupils of the School of Classical Ballet in Genoa, assisted by some pupils from the School of La Scala in Milan and a school in Florence.

IT was obvious that a programme could not open on *The Pas de Quatre* so Ugo Dell'Ara devised this spectacle with a dual purpose—to serve as a romantic introduction to the main dish and also to display some of Italy's young dancers to an international audience.

When an audience has arrived with the express purpose of seeing international stars it is bound to get slightly restive at anything which precedes their appearance. Not that the audience in this case showed any outward signs of becoming restive but there was perhaps more an atmosphere of tolerance rather than of full appreciation. I think therefore that the work was rather long and could have been cut by ten minutes to its advantage. If on the other hand you were somebody, like myself, who was extremely anxious to see the young Italian entry, then this ballet proved to be an admirable showcase.

The intense musicality of the work and the wise avoidance of those complicated inventions, which can provide such pitfalls to young dancers without considerable stage experience, made it ideal for its purpose. Dell'Ara's choreography had a nice flow which embraced a number of effective groupings.

On the opening night some of the dancing was rather tentative but by the second performance complete assurance was realised. Apart from Barabaschi, a dancer too forceful and unyielding for a Romantic work, the company of about 30 strong remained anonymous. I was left with the impression of some beautiful arms and nice fluid lines, highish *arabesques*, mainly good turns but weak *bourrées*. Altogether clean, good classical schooling. The four boys who took part were not too strong on partnering but one, who had a tiny variation to himself, revealed beautiful beats and

OVERTURE FOR THE QUEEN: *Young dancers from three Italian schools, mainly from Genoa, in Ugo Dell'Ara's* Ouverture per la Regine *which opened the festival and was dedicated to the visiting stars. The picture gives some idea of the stage in the park of Nervi.* *Photo: Lido*

technique which promised very well for the future. I think he came from the school in Genoa.

If this ballet was considered to be a display of students, then the standard in Italy is extremely high and one hopes that these dancers will eventually form the nucleus of a ballet company which the country sorely needs. *Ouverture per le Regine* was immediately followed by:

The Pas de Quatre

Choreography by Anton Dolin. Music by Cesare Pugni. Costumes based on the lithograph of A. E. Chalon realised by Karinska.

Taglioni .. .. ALICIA MARKOVA
Grisi .. .. YVETTE CHAUVIRE
Grahn .. MARGRETHE SCHANNE
Cerrito .. .. CARLA FRACCI

WHEN Perrot created his *Pas de Quatre* in 1845 it was a sensational idea. In those days there was not much love lost between the great ballerinas of the time and the audience probably went to see the ballet with as many high expectations of some kind of scandal as of seeing the stars dance. When Dolin mounted his re-creation of this stellar divertissement for Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo during the war, he also had the four prominent stars of the company in mind though the risk of scandal was far less great. However, even in Perrot's time, the other three ballerinas gave of their own free will, pride of place to Taglioni. In the same way all the ballerinas of today give pride of place to Alicia Markova who is most surely the embodiment of the greatest ballerina of the Romantic era—Marie Taglioni.

The choreography, as Dolin sees it, is apt and slight, while admirably evoking what we believe to be the spirit of the age in which it was originally created. Its very slender quality gives the ballerina a chance of superimposing her particular school without in any way destroying the unity of the ballet as a whole. So when the work is given, as it so frequently has in the past few years, by ballerinas and soloists of one company and of the same school the work has lost much of its interest. It was therefore a splendid idea of Mario Porcile's when he invited Dolin to mount this work for the Nervi Festival with an international star cast. The choice of ballerinas could hardly have been bettered.

The opening group, based on the Chalon lithograph, is followed, as most readers must by now know, by a variation for each of the ballerinas.

Margrethe Schanne, as her fellow countrywoman Lucie Grahn, started the ball rolling. The Romantic school of Denmark's Bournonville, of which Schanne is such a notable exponent, was more in evidence than I have ever seen before in this variation. I would say that Dolin had elaborated it to give Schanne a greater chance to display the beats and jumps for which her school is justly famous. Anyway the total result was a far stronger variation than is usual and it was beautifully danced throughout.

The case of Yvette Chauviré, who followed as Carlotta Grisi, was more difficult. The Romantic school deriving from Vestris has really been lost in France and contemporary French dancers stem mainly from the neoclassic school of Serge Lifar which is an extension of the Russian school brought to Europe by Diaghilev. Chauviré therefore has to superimpose a school and style which must have been somewhat alien to her. The very great difficulty in evoking the dance of the Romantic era is in the avoidance of any suspicion of burlesque; it can so easily descend to another form of Tudor's *Gala Performance*. Here I can speak with a little first-hand experience because Andrée Howard and I encountered some of these difficulties in creating that "very romantic ballet," *Selina*, for the young dancers of the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet. You can laugh with the true evocation of a past period but you should never laugh at it —not if it is properly realised.

Chauviré's Grisi teetered on the border-line between evocation and burlesque, with an occasional gesture falling on the latter side. She danced with a certain amount of what some people would call Parisian wit and humour—two qualities I never quite associate with the first Giselle on stage, whatever she may have shown in private life. Here I may be wrong. Anyway she provided an interesting contrast to the lightness of Grahn who proceeded and the youthfulness of Cerrito who followed. Needless to say Chauviré danced, as always, magnificently.

Quite a lot has been heard lately of Carla Fracci the new rising star of La Scala, Milan. As Cerrito was the baby of the original group, so was Fracci the baby of this group. She stood up to the formidable competition very well. Of the three first variations, that of Cerrito is the most clearly defined from a choreographic point of view. Its youth and *allegro* tempo invariably make it a sure-fire hit with the audience. It needs far less interpretation than any of the other variations and sheer competent dancing usually wins the day. Fracci gave far more than mere competence but as to her real qualities as a dancer I shall have more to say later. She was followed by Markova as Taglioni.

I have seen Markova dance this rôle many times and I have admired her; today I marvel. By some miracle she seems to jump higher, turn quicker than at any time in the post-war years. In Nervi she gave a performance of such absolute perfection that I began to wonder if the spirit of the great Italian ballerina was

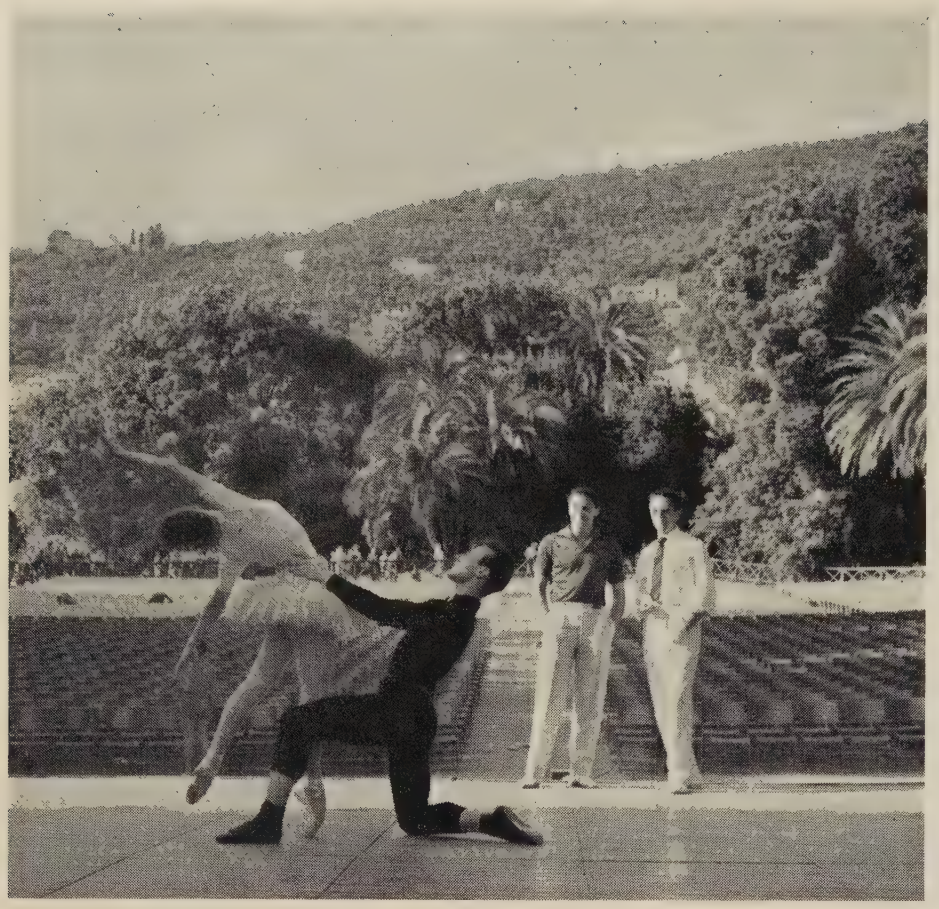
REHEARSAL: The four ballerinas rehearsing The Pas de Quatre *in Paris some weeks before the festival. (L. to R.): Chauviré, Fracci, Schanne, Markova kneeling. Photo: Lido*

MEETING: The four ballerinas arrive in Nervi and meet under the trees of the Hotel Vittoria. (L. to R.): Schanne, Markova, Chauviré, Fracci.

PRELUDE (below): In the Park of Nervi after the dress rehearsal on the day of the opening of the festival. (L. to R.): Schanne, Markova and Fracci. Photos: Leoni

PERFORMANCE: Schanne in front with Markova and Fracci in the distance taken on stage during the actual opening performance which was televised to seven countries.

FINAL GROUP (below): At the end of the performance, and after each ballerina has received a bouquet, they return to the group upon which the ballet opened. This group is based on the original lithograph by A. E. Chalon. Photos: Lido



ALFRESCO REHEARSAL: The two dancers from La Scala Milan—Carla Fracci and Mario Pistoni—rehearsing on the stage in the Park of Nervi. They are rehearsing the pas de deux, Le Quattro Stagioni (*The Four Seasons*), *which they gave on the opening night of the festival. Watching them are Ugo Dell'Ara (former principal dancer and now Ballet Master at La Scala, also joint director of the first two Nervi festivals) and Mario Porcile who is the present sole artistic director of the festival.* *Photo: Lido*

welcoming Markova to her native soil by manipulating her every movement and gesture. For it is not only her dancing but her whole deportment—from the highest rose petal of the pink flowered wreath on her head to the longest toe nail on her exquisitely moulded foot—that exudes the very air of a bygone period.

To give some idea of what I mean I would draw your attention to the photograph of the final group on page 13. Look for a moment at Taglioni-Markova kneeling on the floor. Look at the tilt of her body and the turn of her head, look at the delicacy of the positioning of the hands holding the bouquet, look at the slight smile on her lips which is never overdone. This picture, though it is of a static pose, will give you a better idea of Markova's interpretation than any words could ever do. The triumph this ballet had with the audience and the press was frankly Markova's triumph, which is not in any way belittling the splendid performances of the other three; they just had the fortune or misfortune, according to how they looked at it, of appearing on the stage with a goddess.

Concert of Stars

THE second part of the programme was given over to *soli* and *pas de deux*. It opened with the *adage* from Lifar's *Nauteos* given by Chauviré and Youly Algaroff. The rôle of the sea nymph who is attracted to a ship-wrecked sailor is one which Chauviré has made very personal to herself and this *pas de deux* is certainly the high spot of the ballet when it is given at the Paris Opéra. Well danced as it was it, in a curious way, did not seem to fit too well into a programme mainly given over to the last century. Margrethe Schanne's variation, *La Lithavienne*, which followed turned the programme back on to its right path. It is a charming example of a theatricalised national dance such as was popular in Romantic ballets. Schanne gave it with humour and exactly the right style and precision. These dances can seem terribly corny if they are given by anyone other than the experienced ballerina, but Schanne made it wholly delightful.

All the dances in this star-studded concert programme were familiar to me except for the two Italians who came next. Carla Fracci and Mario Pistoni, two principal dancers from La Scala, Milan, danced a *pas de deux* by Rodriguez to Glazunov's *Le Quattro Stagioni* (The Four Seasons) and I liked them both very much. Fracci has the broad lyrical quality of a Beriosova and she has a fine stage presence. Her legs need strengthening and she is rather weak in her *bourrées* but she has all the qualities I look for in a ballerina. Her partner, Pistoni, is small and neat and rather like Idzikowski used to be. He has a prodigious leap and he turns and beats well. If these two dancers are in any way typical of the young dancers which Italy has to offer then it would seem that in this country lies a potential source for the future.

As these two artists are still in the making it is hard to lay down any hard and fast rules about the one criticism I am about to make. But I did feel that a little more disciplined schooling and refinement is necessary in both of them. They have great attack and they dance with exuberance but there was a certain lack of finish in their work. What I saw was something that is permitted in an artist of great experienced, for when one has received many years of hard schooling a certain amount of licence is allowed. In the young—and I don't think that either artist is over 20—carelessness can become a most irritating mannerism which is eventually impossible to combat. It may be that the teachers of these artists are perfectly aware of these faults and they are being dealt with; (it may also be that both artists faced with the formidable array of international stars in the programme felt that a little extra exuberance was necessary to make an impression. My own feeling is that at no time is untidiness permissiable in the professional theatre—at any age whatsoever.

The choreography by Rodriguez (presumably it was by our own Alfred who has worked so much at La Scala) was excellent. A nice *adage* containing some Bolshoi-like lifts, a variation for each dancer which showed them off to perfection, and a stimulating *coda*.

When it comes to perfect finish, the Italians could take a lesson from Schanne and Kjeld Noach who followed in the *pas de deux* from Bournonville's *Kermesse in Bruges*. It showed all the finest qualities of the Danish school—elevation, beats and the kind of immaculate charm which is never cloying. It was danced with all the style and gaiety we have come to expect from Schanne; the new authority of Noach came as a very pleasant surprise.

Markova's contribution to this part of the programme was Fokine's *La Mort du Cygne*. Dolin, who happened to be sitting next to me, suddenly let out a gasp, "She might be Pavlova." At the identical moment the same thought passed through my mind. Though I have never much cared for anyone dancing this solo other than the immortal for whom it was created, I must hand it to Markova for having recently added a quality to her interpretation which now makes it a remarkable evocation. To have played the greatest ballerinas in this and the last century in one evening and yet still remained essentially Markova is something which could only be done by—Markova.

Chauviré really came into her own in the final number of the evening—Gsovsky's *Grand Pas de Deux Classique* which she danced with Algaroff. This incredibly difficult piece of virtuosity was originally created for her and she has never been equalled in it—though many have tried. The Auber music has so much dash and music-hall grandeur that it always wins me over however surly I may be feeling. Choreographically it is a little masterpiece for the concert programme—being both musical and spectacular.

An original apotheosis was devised for bringing on the stars to take their calls. To an *arpeggio* on the harps, the young student dancers of the first ballet formed into groups and lines which made a triumphal entrance for each of the ballerinas. No description of this wholly memorable evening of dance would be complete without paying tribute to the conductor from La Scala—Luciano Rosada. The way he handled the programme's varied bits and pieces as well as meeting the requirements of the dances was masterly. I wish he could come and conduct occasionally in England—we need him.

Spain and France

AS I had to be in Aix-les-Bains, I missed the next attraction at Nervi—Le Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas. But from reports, I gather that the Marquis was presented with a plaque by the city of Genoa and he, in return, presented three new ballets—*Edmonde or*

Youth, Love, Passion by Paul Goubé to Rachmaninoff's second Piano Concerto; *Duetto* by Lifar to some Verdi music from *Rigoletto*; *Otello* by Françoise Adret to Jean-Michel Damase music. Also from reports, I gather that none of these works was of any great consequence.

I did return, however, to see the Spanish Dance Theatre of Luisillo in a programme almost identical to that which he presented in London (fully reviewed in DANCE AND DANCERS, January 1957) last winter. Since then, Luisillo has toured his company across South Africa and with enormous success. In the meantime the company has matured considerably. With the addition of an orchestra, instead of the two pianos which it used previously, the whole amounts to a most stimulating evening of Spanish dancing which the not usually very warm Italian audience greeted with fervour. The most marked improvement was in the dancing of Térésa Amaya who had developed greater style in her flamenco numbers and corrected the fault of poking her head forward.

There is no doubt that companies of this kind which are based on national dances are by far the most effective for alfresco presentation. The very fact that most of the dances anyway were created for national fêtes and to be given in squares and open plains means that in the theatre they are bound to get rather closed-in and lose some of their essential freshness. With classical ballets it is something different, for divorced from their designed settings and the atmosphere of the theatre the dance and its dancers appear occasionally rather incongruous rather like an upholstered sofa in the middle of a lawn.

The great exception to this rule is Lifar's *Suite en Blanc* with which the Paris Opéra opened their performance at the Nervi Festival on July 31. Using a rostrum of black steps which got lost in the night sky and with its elegant white classical costumes, this ballet looked magnificent. It had great dignity and, working up as it does to an exciting climax, left an unforgettable impression.

Of Lifar's many ballets for the Opéra, this is the one which wears best and it makes a splendid work with which to open a programme. Its massive *ensembles, soli, pas de deux-trois-quatre* and *cinque* make ideal for displaying the company and its principals. On top of it all the work is blessed by Lalo's lush and beautiful score.

One of the main interests of this particular performance was to see Marjorie Tallchief and George Skibine who have recently joined the Paris Opéra.

Skibine danced in the *pas de trois* with Amiel and Bozzoni and, later, in the *pas de deux* with Tallchief. In spite of the fact that he had barely recovered from a foot injury which has incapacitated him for several months, he was in very good form, had regained his elegant figure and showed the sort of nobility which the Opéra needs. Tallchief brought her technical perfection to everything she did.

I did not think that the *Mazurka* really suited Michel Renault as he was too untidy. This dance so essentially needs the style which Skibine used to give it when he danced in the ballet with the company of the Marquis de Cuevas. Amiel danced *La Cigarette* well but she still lacks the charm of her predecessors in this variation. Claire Motte, a new *étoile*, was very good indeed in *The Flute* solo.

This ballet is a fine showcase for the male soloists and *corps de ballet* and some of the young boys of the company reveal outstanding promise. In fact I have not seen such a promising collection of young male dancers for many years. The girls, oddly enough, are less impressive and there was a certain amount of raggedness in the *corps* work.

Why is it that French dancers are never at their best in Tchaikovsky-Petipa classics? Possibly because as they have none of the complete works (anyway never much liked by a Paris audience) in their repertoires, they have no feeling for the style or tradition of these Russian masterpieces. They dance them well but any feeling of the essential grandeur is missing. A typical example was provided by Liane Daydé in the *Black Swan pas de deux* which immediately followed *Suite en Blanc*. Her main fault is that she pokes her head forward and never seems over her true centre. Her line was unattractive, and line, to me at any rate, is of paramount importance in any Petipa work. Very different was her partner Peter Van Dijk whose well-schooled classicism is one of the joys of any Opéra performance. He has an ease and freedom which never intrudes beyond the boundary of good schooling. Although almost everything he does is spectacular he is never showy, and he never gives that "Look! how clever I have been" feeling which is, I am afraid, apparent in so much French classical dancing today. He later appeared as the black horse in Skibine's delightful equine *pas de trois—L'Idylle*—and gave a very good account of himself. In this work, Tallchief repeated her outstanding performance of the white horse who leaves her espoused black horse for a temporary little amatory canter with a flashy circus horse.

In her variation she really gives an astounding display of virtuosity which leaves the spectator gasping. As the decked-up grey circus pony, who loses his glamour with his trappings, Max Bozzoni failed to bring any of the mischievous humour which Skouratoff achieved when he created the rôle.

Daydé and Renault in Lifar's *Romeo and Juliet* (the Tchaikovsky one) did nothing to efface the recent memory of Vyroubova and Algaroff in this dramatic *pas de deux* at Monte Carlo. Nor was Daydé so good as when she danced it in Santander with Peter Van Dijk last year. Some moments seemed more comic than tragic and on this occasion the work's choreographic faults were all too clearly revealed.

This almost entirely black and white programme finished with Harald Lander's *Etudes*. I am not being unduly patriotic when I say that it hardly touched Festival Ballet's always remarkable performance at any point. The fact is that the English company, judged by any standards you like to think of, dance it far better and give it with cleanness and style. What is more, Toni Lander's rôle, in the Opéra production, has been split up so that it is no more an almost Giselle-like rôle in that one ballerina has to display Romanticism and brilliant neo-classicism all in the space of a few minutes. Admittedly Tallchief was dancing in the ballet for the first time and she is such a strong technician that she will eventually give something of what Toni Lander has brought to this work. Amiel was rather too lush and full-blooded to give any of the feeling of the Taglioni era in the Romantic section of the ballet. Renault again was too obviously flashy in the Gilpin rôle, though Peter Van Dijk was

GLAZUNOV PAS DE DEUX: *Carlo Fracci and Mario Pistoni during the performance of the* pas de deux *by Rodriguez. They are seen rehearsing this work on the opposite page. Photo: Lido*

DANISH LEAPS: Margrethe Schanne and Kjeld Noach in jetés *from the* Kermesse in Bruges pas de deux *which they gave on the opening night of the festival. Photo: Lido*

splendid in the part which will now always be associated with Flemming Flindt.

In only one part could it be said that the Opéra bettered Festival Ballet and that was in the dancing of the male *corps de ballet.*

Owing to the fact that I had to return to Aix-les-Bains for the World Choreographic Congress and competition for young choreographers, I missed the second Paris Opéra programme which contained a Lifar creation —*Joyous Farandol*—to Prokofiev music. Writing later to me about this, an Italian critic described it as "neither a farandol, nor joyous." Far more interesting apparently was Peter Van Dijk's creation—*Unfinished Symphony*—to Schubert music. But in between the Luisillo and the Paris Opéra engagements, I did see an evening of unusual dance interest.

Massine and the Noble Lord

SANDWICHED between two Hungarian films—the always delightful *Wedding at Ecser* and *Dance Tzigane*—were two widely different stars—Leonide Massine and Lord Wakehurst. Massine lectured for over an hour on the dances of the North American Red Indians. As his lecture was in Italian, I am afraid that I failed to understand the major part of it. The boredom unfortunately brought about by any long discourse in a language which one does not fully understand, was completely obliterated by the half an hour which followed when Massine himself demonstrated the steps.

This spare little genius with his still solemnly beautiful face retains his magnetic power in the theatre. Among the many memories I have of Massine's unique interpretations in a large number of ballets, this demonstration of Red Indian dancing will remain high up on the list. The authoritative tilt of his still sinuous body, the perfect precision of his footwork as he shows the deceptively complicated steps, the way he has mastered the unusual rhythms; all added up to a remarkable experience in the theatre which it was an honour to witness. After him came Lord Wakehurst who talked in French about the rise of British ballet with special reference to the Royal Ballet, of which he is one of the directors. A colour film, which had moments of unusual and unexpected beauty as so often occurs in amateur films, showed the Royal Ballet in the theatre, at school and on tour as well as other British companies and foreign visitors. We were shown films of Arnold Haskell and the Royal Ballet School, and films actually taken during performances at Covent Garden, including: Beryl Grey in the *Rose Adagio* from *The Sleeping Beauty*, both Ulanova and Markova in *Giselle*. By far the most interesting were the films of Beriosova in *The Prince of the Pagodas*, which revealed an exciting new quality in the costumes. From other companies there were excerpts from the Royal Danish Ballet's *La Sylphide*, Festival Ballet's *Napoli* and Ballet Theatre's *Les Sylphides*.

At a party afterwards I asked Massine if he has ever thought of reviving *Pulcinella*. He replied: "I would love to revive it in England if anyone would ask me. Unfortunately in England I think that they have forgotten me." He said this with such sorrow in his voice that I was left to ponder a bit. In England, I am afraid, we *do* tend to forget and that is one of the reasons why I make it my business to traipse across the world to see some of the things which England has forgotten or never knew. That is why we are grateful to people like Mario Porcile who take the trouble to show us the world's greatest stars in delightful surroundings such as the park of Nervi can provide. That is why these festivals are playing a most vital part in the present and the future of ballet. Everything should be done to see that they become a permanent part of the life of ballet in this world so that people—won't forget.

LINE-UP OF STARS: Schanne, Ugo Dell'Ara, Markova, Anton Dolin, Chauviré, Youly Algaroff, Luciano Rosada (conductor) and Fracci in one of the many curtain calls at the end of the opening programme of the Nervi Festival. Photo: Lido

Two Creations for Ballet Rambert

Conte Fantastique

First given in London by Ballet Rambert at the Sadler's Wells Theatre on July 30, 1957. Choreography by Andrée Howard. Music by André Caplet. Designed by Malcolm Pride. Ballet based on *The Masque of the Red Death* by Edgar Alan Poe.

Cast

Prince Prospero	KENNETH TILLSON
His Paramour	VIOLETTE VERDY
Three Entertainers	JUNE SANDBROOK, SHIRLEY DIXON, IAN METSIS
The Intruder	GILLIAN MARTLEW

THE ballet is set in the Middle Ages. A terrible plague, the Red Death, is raging, and the stricken people are dying in anguish. Prince Prospero, resolving to escape the plague, barricades himself, his paramour and his court in a distant abbey. Here he and his courtiers amuse themselves, until their privacy is invaded by a black-garbed Intruder. Death has found his way in, and one by one the Court succumbs.

ORGY: Prince Prospero (Kenneth Tillson) with his Paramour (Violette Verdy) in a pas de deux *which is part of the hectic rout by which he hopes to ward off the attentions of the plague.*
Photo: John Chesworth

CHOREOGRAPHY

CONTE FANTASTIQUE is the first ballet Andrée Howard has created for the Ballet Rambert since *The Sailor's Return* in 1947. It does however bring her total tally for the company up to 14, a record that has only been exceeded by Ashton and Tudor, but whereas their association with the company ended before the war, Howard's now extends over a period of 24 years.

The ballet is based, as is André Caplet's score, on the Edgar Alan Poe story *The Masque of the Red Death*. Poe's grotesque tale, with its macabre trappings, its welter of blood and subtly understated melodrama, might be expected to form a very workable basis for ballet. All the choreographer has had to do to the original source is to provide Prince Prospero with Paramour, and the scenario stands ready made.

The main difficulty posed by the story is that, like quite a lot of Poe, it depends for its effectiveness as much on atmosphere as incident. Apart from the situation of the plague and Prospero's flight, which is posed right at the beginning, and this situation's resolution with the entrance of the mysterious figure of Death, nothing really happens. Even the characters remain as ciphers against the backcloth of hedonistic corruption and fair-painted decay.

Few choreographers are more adept at creating atmosphere in a ballet than Andrée Howard. One has only to think of *Mardi Gras* with its sinister undercurrent of doom, or *A Mirror for Witches*, to realise how skilfully she can evoke a dramatic mood. But evocation and atmosphere take time; and it is in this irreplaceable commodity that the composer falls, quite literally, short.

The scene of the plague has to be established in the first few moments. All Miss Howard can do is to have a few bedraggled creatures dragging themselves painfully across the stage, bathed in red light. Prospero and his Court are given no space in which to expand. There is scarcely room in which to develop the character of the Prince, let alone the Courtiers. The entrance of the waltzing Death, and his parade through—if I remember aright—seven inter-linked chambers, which is so marvellously effective in Poe, here goes for almost nothing.

Not that Miss Howard can be held blameless for the comparative dullness of her new piece. The dances she has arranged for Prospero and his Paramour lack true distinction, even though like the rest of the choreography, they show the choreographer's command of her medium and feeling for line and music.

Probably the most interesting dancing has been given to a trio of Harlequin-like Entertainers. Here Miss Howard is nimbly inventive, and makes a nicely imaginative touch when the male entertainer is caught in the scarlet light from one of the windows and thinks he has already caught the Red Death.

The ballet's ending, when Death is seen to be nothing but an empty cloak, loses somewhat from its similarity to the device Cranko employs in *The Shadow*.

It is good to see Andrée Howard making ballets once more after far too long an absence. But I hope that her next ballet provides her with a subject and score that will enable her individual qualities as an artist to make as deep an impression as does her craftsmanship in this work.

DANCING

ALTHOUGH the ballet served to introduce the young French ballerina Violette Verdy as a guest artist with the Ballet Rambert, the rôle of the Paramour made only slight demands upon her abilities. Her dancing was efficient, but it was hard to remember that this was the same girl who had brought London to her feet in Petit's *Le Loup*. To tell the truth she looked just a little bored, as though she had been barricaded in that Abbey a week or so too long.

Prince Prospero was Kenneth Tillson's first important rôle. A newcomer to the company, he has good looks and an apparently strong stage personality. On the first night he partnered a little hesitantly, but improved in subsequent performances. His dancing seemed to be pretty well confined to *pirouettes*, which he accomplished with more vigour than neatness.

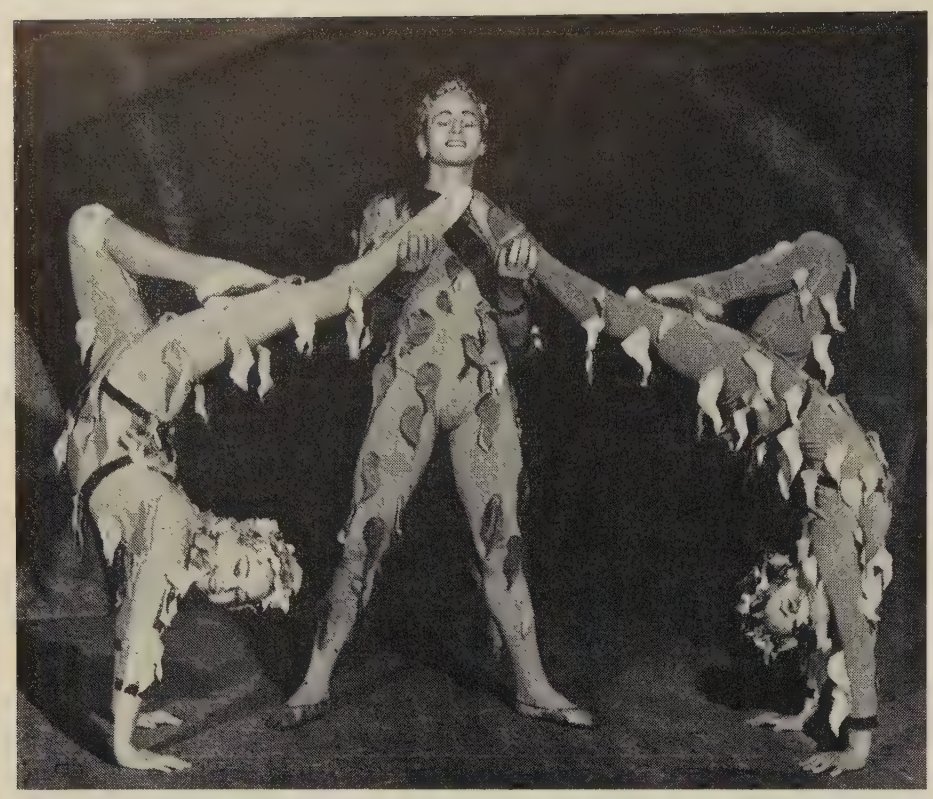
Another promising male dancer new to the company is the Greek boy, Ian Metsis. As one of the three entertainers he made a most favourable impression. The two girls with him, June Sandbrook and Shirley Dixon, are also obviously dancers of definite potentiality.

This note of promise was struck throughout the performance, indeed throughout the season. The company as a whole is in better shape than it has been for the past ten years or so.

Clive Barnes

MUSIC

ANDRÉ CAPLET, who was born at Le Havre in 1878 and died in Paris in 1925 from the after-effects of gas poisoning during the First World War, was as renowned as a conductor as a composer. His fine ear for delicate blends of sound made him an ideal interpreter of the music of his friend, Claude Debussy; and his own compositions bear



unmistakable witness to the fascination Debussy's magical impressionism held for him.

His *Conte Fantastique* was originally scored for harp and string quartet, but also exists in a version with string orchestra—that used in the present production. In it Caplet exploits with great subtlety the exquisite effects of colour and sonority that can be obtained from the planging of harp against shimmering string texture. He achieves a dreamlike, other-worldly atmosphere, and his intention would seem to have been to provide a musical equivalent of the eerie mood of this particular "Tale of Mystery and Imagination" of Poe, rather than to parallel its dramatic development. It is a highly evocative piece of mood painting, though somewhat uneventful and limited by its economical scoring to a fairly narrow range of dynamic contrasts.

It was typical of so musically sensitive a choreographer as Andrée Howard that, having decided to use Caplet's *Conte Fantastique* as the basis for a ballet, she should have created choreography that so perfectly matched the music in sensibility and understatement—or in other words, the ballet as a whole shares all the music's felicities of finely-detailed invention as well as its weaknesses of insufficient dramatic content for so luridly melodramatic a story.

David Hunt

DECOR

LAST month when discussing Alexandre Benois's designs for *Graduation Ball*, I talked about the vital importance of suitability in choosing a designer. The next step on from that is whether the designer, having been chosen, creates the right environment. In his designs for Howard's *Conte Fantastique*, Malcolm Pride although he has achieved undoubted gloom has not really succeeded in bringing out one vital point. The Prince, in the Mediaeval fantasy, tries to create a false atmosphere in an attempt to keep out the invader—the plague. In doing this the Prince would surely surround himself with brilliance and glitter in a throne-room rather than in a cellar. The final triumph of death in a setting of pomp and pageantry would then have been far more sinister. As it is I was inclined to wonder why they had not all caught the plague earlier in this dusty low-vaulted catacomb. The set, well designed though it is, would be far more suitable for *The Hunchback of Nôtre-Dame*.

To my mind it has robbed the ballet of much of its intended drama. The contrast of the plague-stricken figures, which open the ballet, would then have brought their point home.

Not having seen the actual designs, I don't know whether the bulkiness of the court ladies was Pride's fault, or a fault of realisation, but the fact remained that they looked lumpish on the stage and some of the colours were not too attractive. The colour combination for which I have a personal dislike—puce and lime green—was rather in evidence. Verdy, as the Paramour, had, for some inexplicable reason, a dress of gold and peach Lurex which was completely out of place; admittedly she removed it before the work had progressed far and I, for one, could hardly blame her.

The main impression left with the designing was that nothing quite fitted together. All of which was a pity because the story is one that should lend itself to some most inspired designing.

Peter Williams

ENTERTAINERS (Top left): June Sandbrook, Ian Metsis and Shirley Dixon as the three tumblers who try to divert the Prince and his court.

PAS DE DEUX (Bottom left): Violette Verdy and Kenneth Tillson in another moment from the pas de deux *which is the high spot of the ballet. Photos: John Chesworth*

STRANGE PARTNER: Patricia Dyer, as the girl obsessed by her reflection in a mirror, pays little heed to the dancers at a ball. A moment from Ronald Yerrell's ballet which gives some idea of the setting designed by Disley Jones. *Photo: John Chesworth*

Mirror

First given in London by Ballet Rambert at the Sadler's Wells Theatre on August 8, 1957. Choreography by Ronald Yerrell. Designed by Disley Jones. Music by Eric Larsen.

Cast

The Girl	PATRICIA DYER
Her Reflection	PATRICIA ASHWORTH
The Young Man	NORMAN DIXON

Corps de ballet of Guests

A GIRL is irresistibly drawn to her reflection in her mirror. She is so obsessed with her own image that she hardly notices the life around her or the man who loves her. He, in desperation, breaks the mirror. Her image banished, she becomes free to respond to his love.

CHOREOGRAPHY

AS a general classification the term "psychological ballet" requires some elaboration. There are at least two types of ballet that owe something to psychology: those which, like *Pillar of Fire*, tell a straightforward story but utilise human psychology in either or both its scenario and choreography; then there are those, like *The Shadow*, which seek to show in symbolic terms a specific aspect of psychological theory. *Mirror* falls into the second category.

This is Ronald Yerrell's third ballet. His two previous works, *The Alcove* and *The Waterfall*, were both produced for Ballet Workshop a few years ago. The comparison of his latest ballet, first produced last year, with *The Shadow* is instructive.

Both ballets have a lot in common quite apart from their shared interest in psychology. Both are basically works requiring a small cast but with an extraneous *corps de ballet* added to meet the needs of the existing score. Both have a denouement that depends on a stage effect; in *The Shadow* it is the pulling away of the Shadow's cloak, in *Mirror* it is the breaking of the mirror.

The narcissus-complex is always good for a ballet, and Yerrell has constructed the work quite skilfully. It is not meant as discouragement, however, when I say that every problem faced by Yerrell in *Mirror* has been met with greater success by the more experienced Cranko in *The Shadow*.

In *The Shadow* Cranko, landed with his dramatically unnecessary *corps de ballet*, uses it with such good sense that it actually plays a part in setting the atmosphere for the principals. As far as the narrative is concerned *Mirror* is a *pas de troise*, but unlike Cranko, Yerrell has not got the experience to use his basically redundant *corps* to point a contrast with his principals. His Guests come bustling on at the behest of the music, and once on, can think of nothing better to do than to bustle off again.

Cranko's stage device of the Shadow is extremely simple, and keeps its secret until the end. Yerrell's Mirror is not only unworkable —the Girl's mirror image is allowed to step outside the mirror, and the Boy does not cast a reflection when he stands in front of it—but its shattering comes as only an anti-climax.

If I have stressed the work's shortcomings it is only to offer an explanation of why a definitely talented ballet made less impact than it might have done had its choreographer possessed a little more production sense. For Yerrell not only has the right conception of what ballet can do, he is also capable of composing taut and virile choreography. Disregarding the rather empty-headed entries for the *corps*, quite a lot of his work for the principals seemed admirable.

Mirror reinforces the opinion I formed after his two earlier ballets, that Yerrell has the makings of a choreographer.

DANCING

RAMBERT has always concentrated her strength on dramatic dancers. Considering her repertory this is inevitable. Her dancers growing up in the company enjoy unequalled opportunities to dance strong dramatic rôles. As would be expected her present group contains quite a number of dancer-actors of more than average ability.

Yerrell has made good use of three of them in his ballet, Patricia Dyer, Patricia Ashworth (Yerrell's wife) and Norman Dixon. All three were excellent, but perhaps a special word is due to Dixon who that week was in the middle of a dance marathon. Before the first performance of *Mirror* he had in the previous three days danced four performances of Albrecht in *Giselle*, two of Frantz in *Coppélia*, Act 3, and two of *Simple Symphony*.

Clive Barnes

MUSIC

LARS-ERIK LARSSON'S *Pastoral* Suite, to which Ronald Yerrell has set his ballet, is a typically melodious and immediately enjoyable work of the Swedish composer and conductor

ATTEMPTED DISTRACTION: Guests in fantastic costumes and the Young Man (Norman Dixon) try to distract the Girl (Patricia Dyer) from the mirror. Photo: John Chesworth

He has progressed from an earlier neo-classical idiom to a warmly romantic style, which, in such works as the *Pastoral* Suite, owes a great deal to Sibelius. In fact, the Finnish master's influence is so strong in this particular work that most people hearing it for the first time without knowing the composer would probably plump for Sibelius; though the three movements—*Overture*, *Romance*, *Scherzo*—avoid the suggestion of triviality and "writing down" which often characterises Sibelius's lighter productions.

As it turned out, the suite made excellent ballet music, even if Yerrell ran into precisely the same difficulties as had John Cranko with his *The Shadow* in setting a dramatic plot to a suite that is predominantly blithely extravert in feeling. Fortunately, like Cranko, he was sensible enough to allow the music to dictate the form and pattern of his choreography, so that if in the outer movements the high-jinks of the *corps* kept intruding on the basic dramatic situation, at least there was no disparity between choreography and music. And in the middle movement where the three central characters were left to themselves, Yerrell achieved a promising lyrical flow. **David Hunt**

DECOR

THERE is no escaping the central feature of this ballet in Disley Jones's décor—the mirror stands there fair and square and completely dominates the stage. The girl can hardly be blamed for being "irresistibly drawn" to it because frankly there is no other distraction. Very elaborate it is with spiky weapons protruding from the back and heraldic device. It was certainly apt but just a little too obvious.

Here is yet another ballet bathed in sombre shadow though the all-pervading malachite green is occasionally brightened by sudden flashes of scarlet and orange in the dresses. These I thought were well designed and subtly cut so that the vivid colours of the pleats let into the skirts, only showed in movement. The masquers' headdresses were exciting too and it looked as though Disley Jones had followed the first exercise once given by Gordon Craig to a young designer which could be slightly altered to: "Make a barbaric costume, then make a barbaric costume for young people at a ball where a girl keeps looking in a mirror." **Peter Williams**

Lars-Erik Larsson (born Aakarp, 1908). Although Larsson was a pupil of Alban Berg he rejected the 12-tone system of composition for his own music, which has nothing in common with the soul-searching seriousness or intellectualism of the latter-day Viennese school. As he himself has said, "Listen to my music as music, and if you cannot understand it without explanation, then it is not your fault; it is I who have fallen short in my work."

West Goes East

Western Theatre Ballet's first London season

by CLIVE BARNES

BRITISH ballet is based in London, and has been ever since its first stirrings. This is inevitable from the circumstances of ballet's development in this country, and in the past has proved generally advantageous. When the resources of ballet were strictly limited, their concentration in London was vital for its growth.

The result has been the building up of four companies: the Ballet Rambert, the two divisions of the Royal Ballet, and London's Festival Ballet. Although the differing functions of the two Royal companies are just at the moment not quite clearly defined, it seems as though each of these four companies has an individual part to play in the general ballet scene.

This state of affairs has many obvious disadvantages. All the companies, except the senior arm of the Royal Ballet, do a great deal of provincial touring; indeed, they spend more time out of London than in it. Yet the size of the theatres in which they play is strictly governed, and there are many towns which, for one reason or another, cannot support any of the existing companies. Consequently the need exists for a small compact group of dancers that would make visits to the smaller towns, some of them theatreless, not only physically practicable but financially possible.

Nor need such a company be a watered-down substitute for one of the larger organisations. Ballet in England has inevitably become something of a closed shop which ballet-workers outside a comparatively limited circle find difficult to enter. Since Ballet Workshop's cessation of activities, openings have been fewer than ever. Small groups working on shoe-string budgets are the only companies that could ever give these people their chance.

In most other European countries ballet activity is far more widely spread than in England. Each large provincial centre has its own subsidised municipal theatre, housing among its tenants some kind of ballet group. Our country does not give municipal patronage so generously. Yet small regional ballet companies, based in the provinces and capable of a certain amount of touring, are just what British ballet needs at the present juncture. They could have some of the vitality of the "little theatre movement" that achieved so much for the dramatic theatre before the war.

Regional ballet is not an entirely new idea. Certain of the larger ballet clubs have been moving in that direction, while in Edinburgh the Celtic Ballet has achieved a great deal both in Scotland and as far afield as America.

The latest attempt to start a regional ballet company has been made in Bristol. The Western Theatre Ballet consists of about a dozen dancers. It has been organised by Elizabeth West and Peter Darrell, its two artistic directors. A great deal of invaluable support has been found in Bristol, and an Arts Council guarantee of £500 was secured for the company's inaugural tour. This tour started, blessed perhaps by the shades of the Ballets Jooss, at Dartington Hall, and culminated in a week's season at the Theatre Royal, Bristol, and a week at the Arts Theatre, London.

I was able to see the company both in Bristol and London, and formed a very favourable impression of its capabilities. The company certainly has defects and is probably, at the moment, best appreciated by either those who know nothing or by those who know a great deal about ballet. The first group will instinctively recognise its high professional standard and be attracted by its theatrical know-how. The second group will marvel at what has been achieved with so little, and will realise that the company's aspirations more than compensate for any present shortcomings. Here is a small beginning that could develop into something really important.

In discussing the repertory it is neither necessary nor desirable to pull any punches. Even from the first, the company has shown itself to be in the main stream of British ballet, and could never be confused with the miserable small companies of worthless artistic value that have so often trailed up and down the country in the sacred name of ballet.

Tableaux Vivants

Choreography, Décor and Costumes by Ronald Wilson. Music by Virgil Thomson.

Cast

SUZANNE MUSITZ, PETER DARRELL, BRENDA LAST, MARGARET GREY, JENNIFER LAYLAND
ANNA PASKEVSKA BARRY SALT
OLIVER SYMONS, ERLING SUNDE, JEFFERY TAYLOR, HAZEL MERRY

THIS is a simple but often ingenious *divertissement* that serves as a good introduction to the company. Ronald Wilson is, of course, best known as a designer, but he originally started his career as a dancer. Although he has now choreographed two or three ballets—this is his first fully professional work—he has never himself danced in a ballet company. This circumstance, singular enough in itself, is made stranger by the strong dance content of his choreography. This is far from being what one would expect from a designer.

Wilson has, as can be seen from a perceptive critical appreciation he once wrote, a strong affinity with Balanchine. And it is Balanchine and Gore (the choreographer with whom he has been most usually associated as a designer) who have influenced this ballet, although Kenneth MacMillan has also obviously played his part in Wilson's ballet education.

To an extent, or rather to a degree, *Tableaux Vivants* is eclectic, yet the influences that have formed its choreography have been absorbed, and the result is something of Wilson's own. The ballet is rather too long, and perhaps too prodigal with both literary and choreographic ideas. It is intended to be inconsequential—a sort of children's charade—but I personally feel that such a *divertissement* would have gained from having a clearer underlying theme or possibly a more "consistent" atmosphere.

In its variety there is much to praise, even if, like many ballets of its type, it would improve with pruning. The piano music by Virgil Thomson has been sensitively used, and the choreography for the best numbers is unusually imaginative. In the final Two-Step, Wilson has created a dance worthy of the Balanchine of *Western Symphony*. Fate will have its revenge, and it seemed ironical that probably the least satisfactory aspect of the work was Wilson's own *décor*, which was too indeterminate by half.

The ballet, by no means lenient in its technical demands, was cleanly performed by the whole company. Peter Darrell and Suzanne Musitz were excellent in the satirical psuedo-Spanish number to end all satirical psuedo-Spanish numbers, and the outstanding dancer throughout was Brenda Last. As bright as a new penny she fairly glistened with youth.

The Prisoners

Book and Choreography by Peter Darrell. Music by Béla Bartók. Décor and Costumes by Barry Kay.

Cast

Baudin BARRY SALT
Christophe ERLING SUNDE
Madeleine, his wife SUZANNE MUSITZ
Warders and Villagers

UNLIKE his two fellow-choreographers, Peter Darrell is very experienced both as a dancer and as a choreographer. *The Prisoners* is probably his most integrated work to date. It is a dance drama of considerable intensity. The story is of two prisoners, Baudin and Christophe. Led by Christophe they both escape, and are given shelter by Christophe's wife Madeleine. Madeleine falls in love with Baudin, and persuades him to kill her husband. Baudin, tormented by fears, and hounded by society, finds himself once more a prisoner—inside Madeleine's house.

As he showed in an earlier ballet, *The Gift*, Darrell has a considerable talent for the exploration of psychological situations. He seems to be attempting to travel along the same road as Antony Tudor took 20 years ago, and it is interesting to see that, like Tudor before him, Darrell makes very free use of the classical vocabulary, here particularly in his dances for the wayward wife. Some of my colleagues have taken exception to this (as, indeed, Fokine or Noverre would have done), but personally I find it as permissible as Tudor's choreographic treatment of Hagar in *Pillar of Fire*.

Another notable Tudor-device Darrell has utilised in *The Prisoners*, without, I think, entire success, is the "frozen moment of time." In the last scene the villagers and Madeleine suddenly freeze in their movements, while Baudin—unseen by them—walks around the stilled group.

Theatrically the ballet is extremely well produced, a factor that can easily obscure the undoubted originality of much of the choreography. I liked very much the idea of giving Baudin a nervous *tic*, and the characterisation in general is good. The story unfolds naturally and simply, although the ending is perhaps too abrupt. It has something of the gimmicky slickness of the pay-off twist of an O. Henry short-story, and is, in a sense, almost too effective.

The décor and costumes by Barry Kay—a splendid discovery by the company—add immensely to the ballet, and together with Bartok's *Music for Celeste, Percussion and Strings* give to Darrell's work commendable unity and integrity.

Darrell has always been able to compose strong dramatic rôles. I remember his ballet to Poe's *The Tell-Tale Heart*, and Julia Farron's part in *The Gift*. Here he has given his earthy triangle of characters wonderful acting oppor-

THE PRISONERS: *Barry Salt, as Baudin, and Suzanne Musitz, as Madeleine, in Peter Darrell's ballet to Bartók music.*

TABLEAUX VIVANTS: *Peter Darrell and Suzanne Musitz in Ronald Wilson's ballet to Virgil Thomson music.*

PETER AND THE WOLF: *Hazel Merry, as the Duck, with Anna Paskevska, as Peter, in Elizabeth West's version of Prokoviev's children's tale.*

PULCINELLA: *Margaret Grey as Rosetta, Anna Paskevska as Pimpinella, Suzanne Musitz as Prudenza and Peter Darrell in the title rôle of Elizabeth West's version of Stravinsky's ballet.*

tunities. Suzanne Musitz's mixture of dumb peasant mysticism and frank sensuality as Madeleine was very well projected, as were the two Prisoners of Erling Sunde and Barry Salt.

Pulcinella

Choreography by Elizabeth West. Music, after Pergolesi, by Igor Stravinsky. Décor by Barry Kay. Costumes by Phyllida Law.

Cast

Caviello	JEFFERY TAYLOR
A boy	BRENDA LAST
Florindo	ERLING SUNDE
Il Capitano	RUDI SZIGETI
Pulcinella	PETER DARRELL
Prudenza	SUZANNE MUSITZ
Rosetta	MARGARET GREY
Tartaglia	BARRY SALT
Pimpinella	ANNA PASKEVSKA
Fourbo	OLIVER SYMONS
Four little Pulcinellas	DESIREE JERVIS, BRENDA LAST, JENNIFER LAYLAND, HAZEL MERRY

THIS production was in no sense well advised. Tempted no doubt by Stravinsky's delectable score, Elizabeth West has made a brave try at the impossible. The ballet, first produced in 1920, was one of Massine's greatest successes. This new version keeps closely to the original scenario, following the action set out by Mr. Beaumont in *The Complete Book of Ballets*. The story is as complicated as a radio serial and has just about as many characters, but in brief it tells how all the girls love Pulcinella.

I did not see the Massine original and would find it difficult to believe that even he ever made the story clear, did I not know the success Massine had with an equally intractable scenario in *Les Femmes du Bonne Humeur*. Apart from the difficulties of presenting the libretto, the ballet poses the task of conveying the spirit of the *commedia dell'arte*.

This tradition is now nearly extinct, although something of it survives in the tiny pantomime theatre of the Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen, and it finds a modern realisation in the genius of the mime, Marcel Marceau. Ballet has had innumerable flirtations with the *commedia dell' arte*, but its embraces have more often than not been the kiss of death.

Miss West's choreography proved rather stilted, with more bottom-slapping heartiness than wit. However, the company worked well to give the ballet a certain zest, and Peter Darrell made a nimble, if gross, Pulcinella. Also on the credit side were Barry Kay's pleasing architecturally conceived set, and Phyllida Law's often handsome costumes.

Non-Stop

Choreography by Peter Darrell. Music by Williams/Palmer. Décor and Costumes by Barry Kay.

Cast

HAZEL MERRY
OLIVER SYMONS
JEFFERY TAYLOR
and Company

THIS is a light-heartedly macabre trifle, set to a rock 'n' roll score, concerning the activities of a young lady who has a way with her jive partners. It is a sort of ladies' excuse-me dance, as it might be conceived by Charles Addams. A real cool customer finds a partner, dances with him, finds another, strangles the first with the aid of her pony-tail hair-do, and at the end of the ballet a third partner is just coming up for hair.

Rock 'n' roll dancing with its element of grotesque courtliness and the abstracted self-absorption of its dancers is clearly a rich subject for choreographic satire. One can imagine the kind of lightning sketch Ashton might have contributed for a contemporary *Façade*. Darrell's idea, together with its ingenious thread of story, is excellent. Unfortunately the choreography does not quite live up to the conception. It needed just a little more exaggeration for its successful translation into the ballet medium.

However, I liked Hazel Merry as a cute, be-jeaned doll, and the *palais de danse* nonchalance of two former Royal Ballet students, Oliver Symons and Jeffery Taylor, was also well observed.

Peter and the Wolf

Choreography by Elizabeth West. Music by Sergei Prokofiev. Décor and Costumes by Phyllida Law.

Cast

Peter	ANNA PASKEVSKA
The Bird	BRENDA LAST
The Duck	HAZEL MERRY
The Cat	MARGARET GREY
Grandfather	BARRY SALT
The Wolf	ERLING SUNDE
The Hunters	DARRELL, MUSITZ, TAYLOR, LAYLAND

ELIZABETH WEST seems to have an unfortunate liking for re-making old ballets. This is always a perilous business. Although Frank Staff was not the first choreographer to use Prokofiev's musical fairy-story for a ballet, as Adolf Bolm's Ballet Theatre version preceded Staff's by four months, for English audiences, at least, any new production will automatically have to stand comparison with his.

While this present version is in no way the equal of Staff's, it has merits of its own. The stage production is good, and the dancers give broad, forthright characterisations. It is obviously a ballet well suited to the needs of the company, and a positive must for the children's matinées. But when the time comes to enlarge the repertory, I hope the company will steer clear of the dangers of re-worked ballets.

Peter and the Wolf was, in fact, a revival with slightly revised décor of a ballet previously staged two years ago at an occasional performance in Bristol. The only other revival in the repertory was Peter Darrell's *Celeste and Celestinha*, originally produced by Philippe Perrottet's City Ballet. This remains a cheerful opening ballet, although in the present revival the point of the joke is slightly blunted by the cast being the wrong heights. As first given, Celeste and the German tourist were both very tall, while Celestinha and her lover, Vasco, were equally short, and the story hinges on these, in this case, vital statistics.

Already the company appears as an homogeneous group with an individual dance style running through the company. Its standards of production, staging and décor are altogether admirable. That it has artistic problems still to face is undeniable, but these are overshadowed by the sheer economic difficulties it must face in order to survive. The directors are trying desperately hard to keep the group together, but this is going to be far from easy.

The Arts Council already finds it nearly impossible to meet its present commitments, and is unlikely to be able to look as kindly as it perhaps would like on this new venture. But here is a wonderful chance for private enterprise in and around Bristol. **Clive Barnes**

Dancing by the Lake

Festival, Choreographic Congress and Competition of Young Choreographers at Aix-les-Bains

by PETER WILLIAMS

ON France's largest lake—Le Bourget—and surrounded by the mountains of Savoy lies Aix-les-Bains. The Romans discovered the healing properties of its water and remnants of their occupation pop up in the most incongruous places. The walls of the Temple of Diana have become involved in municipal offices and the Arch of Campanus with its beautiful proportions looks slightly uncomfortable on an island in the middle of a roadway. The town has already given three dance festivals but this year, the fourth, a new element was introduced with the inauguration of the First World Congress of Choreography and International Competition for Young Choreographers.

POLES IN SAVOY: Members of the Polish Mazowsze Ensemble dancing by the lake of Le Bourget at Aix-les-Bains. They were one of the many foreign groups to appear at this year's festival. *Photo: Georges Brun*

ADVENTUROUS journeys seem to be my fate. From Genoa to Aix-les-Bains should have taken about six hours by car; Serge Lido and I took fourteen. A defect in the water-cooling system brought us to a halt in Turin in a cloud of steam. A wait of three hours while Italian mechanics had lunch followed by a rather stately progress up the mountains to the frontier brought us to the mountain subway at Bardonecchia just as the train sailed out. A two-hour wait in the chilly altitude followed by the interminable hazards brought about by spring floods in the Modane valley caused us to arrive at the Aix-les-Bains casino in time for the second half of the Idlaflickorna Swedish Ensemble. We looked like a couple of travel-worn tramps in the midst of an audience whose male members were dressed in immaculate white dinner-jackets.

Professor Ernst Idla has formed his group from amateurs as a means of presenting Swedish gymnastics with grace and artistry in the theatre. It is an attempt to prove that music and line are an integral part of physical culture. From what I saw of the second half of the programme, I would say that as a theatrical spectacle for a whole evening, it was rather monotonous.

It was possible to admire the rhythmic beauty of some of the compositions, which were all well lit, also the physical grace and precision of the twenty-odd dancers—all very Scandinavian blonde lovelies. It was also possible to admire Professor Idla's enterprise and attempt at diverting physical culture into new channels, but the fact remains that such a spectacle can hardly hold the attention of an audience for a whole evening. For about twenty minutes in a varied dance programme it would be most impressive. It points the way towards a new use of bodily movement in the theatre which, in its present state, has not been fully realised. But if such a spectacle comes under the heading of "ballet," then I would say that some of the performers were very turned-in.

French Composers' night

On July 25 a programme of ballet was dedicated to French contemporary composers. This was virtually the same programme that was created for the Festival of Enghien and reported by Marie-Françoise Christout in the July number of DANCE AND DANCERS. Already reviewed were Dick Sanders s *Divertissement* to Ibert music, Lifar s *Hamlet* to Marcel Delannoy music, Sanders's *L'Emprise* to Georges Delerue music and Babilée's *La Boucle* to Jean Michel Damase music.

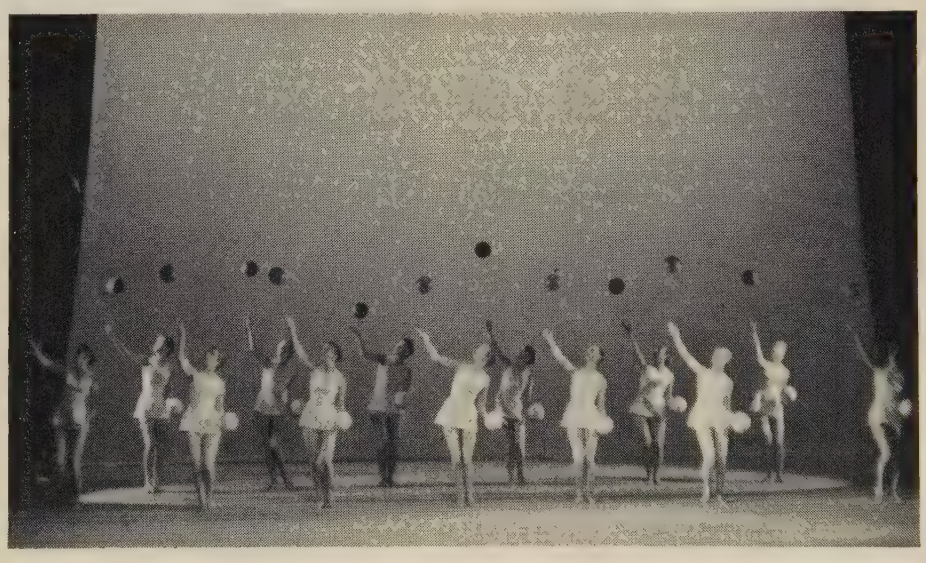
Divertissement was a lively and gay work rather in the style of Michael Charnley but by no means adding up to the best I have seen from Sanders.

I was less shocked at Lifar's temerity to turn Shakespeare's *Hamlet* into a ballet than the French seemed to be. I was shocked at the sudden declamation of "To be, or not to be" which jarred. I was not at all shocked at Vyroubova *en travestie* in the central rôle because she is such a fine artist that I feel she can bring off almost anything. Her absolute conviction in whatever she may be doing makes everything possible. Esteban Cerda as Laertes achieved remarkable understanding of Shakespeare's intentions while still realising Lifar's. Wakhevitch's setting was simple and effective. Lifar's main fault in his choreography and production was that he attempted a too literal translation of the play into terms of the dance —a phantasmagoria such as Helpmann once successfully achieved for the Sadler's Wells Ballet is really the only solution if this tragedy *has* to be turned into a ballet.

The opening moments of Sanders's *L'Emprise* were ruined by atrocious behaviour from the audience in the upper reaches of the theatre. They could not see some of the action taking place on a rostrum so were determined that nobody else should enjoy it either. The ballet is an infinitely touching *pas de deux* using a strange and poetic theme of Pierre Rhallys. In the rôle of the girl, discovered in a ruin by a young man, Claire Sombert gave a most sensitive performance which amounted to one of the most complete interpretations I have yet seen her give.

Babilée's *La Boucle* has a most original theme by Michel Drach but was unfortunately not seen at its best owing to the fact that its complicated production was rather muffed by the stage hands of the Casino theatre in Aix-les-Bains. However it is always a pleasure to see Babilée dance and I very much liked Jovanka Biegovitch. She is a Yugoslav dancer of great beauty and a Bolshoi technique.

SWEDISH GYMNASTICS: Members of the Idlaflickorna Ensemble in Symphonie des Balles *which was the final item of their programme at Aix-les-Bains.* *Photo: Lido*



MAKERS OF LA BOUCLE: *Jean Babilée, the choreographer and principal male dancer, with Michel Drach (responsible for the story) and Jovanka Biegovitch, principal ballerina seen backstage after the performance of* La Boucle *at Aix-les-Bains.*

Photo: Georges Brun

The only new work in the programme, and the special creation for the festival, was:

Suspens

Choreography by Françoise Adret. Music by Albert Roussel. Book and designs by Jean-Philippe Ray.

Atropos CLAIRE SOMBERT
Her Sisters EDMEE REDOIN, LISE PINET
The Young Man GERARD OHN
Destiny ADOLFO ANDRADE
Under the eyes of the gods of Olympus, the three Fates weave the thread of life.

THE story of man courting fate and fighting against his destiny is hardly an original one in ballet. Man always loses and it would be more original if sometimes he overcame these adverse forces.

In a setting which looked for all the world like the inner workings of a mortice lock, the three sisters, raised above the stage on a rostrum, spun. It was hard to know whether one felt any sympathy for the man who was bound to die, because really one knew nothing about him or why he was there. Therefore the ballet's main interest lay in Adret's arrangement of steps and in the dancing.

The beautiful score of Roussel did not seem very apt to the theme nor was I very happy about the way that Adret had wedded her choreography to it. As a choreographer she is rather of the school of Janine Charrat without having the inspiration which is noticeable in so much of Charrat's work, yet it is not fair to judge her work as a whole on only having seen this one ballet. She has certain invention and is forceful, while some of her groups are agreeable. She suffers, as do many French choreographers, from an inability to make her work flow naturally so that each group emerges from the previous one without straining or padding. The work's main impact came from the dancing which was in the main very good.

As Atropos, Claire Sombert gave even further evidence of her growing authority. Considering she had previously danced in Dick Sanders's formidable *pas de deux L'Emprise*, and also played the rôle of Ophelia in Lifar's *Hamlet*, it was indeed remarkable that she made the impact that she did in an energetic new work. She has a quality that is a unique mixture of innocence and maturity which choreographers are starting to make good use of. She has a brilliant technique and is extremely musical. She was well partnered by Gérard Ohn.

TAKEN as a whole it was an evening of considerable interest even if none of the ballets, with the exception of *L'Emprise*, quite came up to expectation. A good deal of the fault was due to inefficient stage management.

On the following night I saw a dress rehearsal of the Polish Mazowsze group who appeared at the Stoll Theatre in London last winter. On the large open-air stage, a group of this kind is far more effective than in a theatre. Numbers such as the *Opoczno Oberek*, *Cracovienne* and *Mazurka* with their well-produced mass dance movements seem to cry out for fresh night air and the stars overhead. It is a pity that Britain cannot see this fine company under such conditions.

Congress and Competition

A SECOND visit to the Nervi Festival in Genoa made it impossible to see the mixed programme given by the Paris Opéra and Opéra Comique at Aix but it was a programme of such well-worn favourites that there could have been little to comment upon. By the time I got back to Aix-les-Bains, the Premier Congress Mondial des Choregraphes had got well into its stride. I discovered I was announced as representing Great Britain as an observer and a judge in the choreographic competition. Delegates from 17 countries were getting most heated about Serge Lifar's proposition that the choreographer should in future be called—*choréauteur*. The reason for this being that the choreographer could then claim author's rights and be protected in the same way as a writer. The obvious validity of such a move was rather offset by the fact that in the programme for the festival a performance of *Coppélia* was announced as having choreography by Serge Lifar. With the changing of a choreographer's status the congress was inclined to wonder whether in future *Coppélia* would become the property of Lifar. Argument about the respective merit of the two words overruled all other questions scheduled to be discussed during the Congress. Lifar, by an extremely dramatic and deft move on the final evening of the Congress, carried the day. Whether this word and its implications will be valid in any country other than France is extremely doubtful.

Delegates who had spent a great deal of money to make the journey to Aix from far-flung places in the world seemed rather discontented that they had only made the journey to become involved in what was really a local argument.

A lady from Italy proposed that all ballet should be State controlled. This proposal, coming as it did from someone who has a certain control in her own country, was not treated with undue seriousness.

Although this First World Congress of Choreographers contributed nothing of great value to the art of choreography, it has started something which may develop in importance in the years to come. It also formed a useful meeting point where choreographers—or *choréauteurs*?—from all over the world could get together and discuss their views and exchange ideas—away from the congress rooms. Unfortunately this year the only choreographers present with an international reputation were Lifar, Boris Kniasseff and Dimitris Parlic.

The years have taught us that words and decisions around a conference table are apt to become null and void—only actions speak in the end. It was therefore the Competition of Young Choreographers that provided the really important contribution to Congress. The choreographers came from four countries —France (Jean Guelis, Jean-Bernard Lemoine and Marise Desèvres), Great Britain (Deryk Mendel), Germany (Marcel Luipart) and America (Mary-Jo Weldon). After the final performance on August 3, twenty chosen people representing various aspects of ballet judged the entries by secret ballot. Their

SUSPENS: *Gérard Ohn, Claire Sombert in the* pas de deux *from Adret's ballet. On the right are Edmée Redoin, Lise Pinet and André Andrade.* *Photo: Lido*

FIRST PRIZE TO EPITHALAME*: Two pictures of Françoise and Dominique in Deryk Mendel's ballet, to Olivier Messiaen music, which was awarded the first prize in the International Competition for Young Choreographers at Aix-les-Bains.* *Photos: Lido*

decision as to who should receive the first prize was almost unanimous and it was awarded to Deryk Mendel with his:

Epithalame

First given at the Théâtre du Casino, Aix-les-Bains on August 3, 1957. Choreography by Deryk Mendel. Music by Olivier Messiaen. Designed by Imai. Production and lighting by Deryk Mendel.

Cast

FRANCOISE DOMINIQUE

with

Nelly Delanoue, Judith Dornys, Hélene Duval, Francine Moineau, Jacqueline Sereville

"*They take pleasure in speaking in parables, and forms and analogies that are not able to be understood except by those who are discrete, religious and enlightened.*"—Synésius.

THE above quotation from Synésius is the only programme note given to enlighten the audience and obviously it foxed a good many while making the whole ballet a little more obscure than it actually turned out to be. The clue, of course, really lay in the title —*Epithalame*—which means a song of marriage.

Occasionally there are cases when the actual subject of a ballet matters very little and this was one of them. The only person who suffers is the poor critic who has to try and absorb all aspects in a work of such depth and then tell you all about it after having seen it only once. Like the works of Martha Graham, this was a creation which probably needs to be seen many times before its full beauty can be properly absorbed.

For his song of marriage, Mendel has made the best use of two French Modern dancers—Françoise and Dominique. Those who know their work well, unfortunately I don't, may say that what Mendel did was merely an extension of their usual performance. Frankly such an argument is of no value because the fact remained that Mendel has integrated these two artists into a dance spectacle which from any point of view was extremely distinguished.

The work opens with the male figure on one side of the stage and the female, surrounded by the *corps*, on the other; they come together in a series of different moods and emotions; in the end the pair move off to the future together and alone. The parents of this work, though Mendel was possibly not aware of it himself, could possibly have been Nijinska's *Les Noces* and Tudor's *Dark Elegies*. He uses the human body beautifully, his movements have great elasticity and a certain invention which is never used for invention's sake. In his choreography he has underlined the spiritual quality of Messiaen's *Quatuor pour la fin des temps*. The oriental mood of this score has been followed out in Imai's designs which are so simple and so satisfactory that most of the other ballets shown looked unbearably cluttered. A misty light—sometimes yellow sometimes red—pervades the whole work and gives it a dreamlike quality. This same oriental sense has been carried out in the work for the *corps* who with great simplicity form a kind of abstract commentary rather like figures in a Noh play.

The choreographer was well served by his dancers and the work of Françoise and Dominique was some of the most distinguished seen during the whole festival.

There was some consternation among certain members of the congress that a Modern Dance work should receive the first prize. They seemed to think that this acceptance would put the whole art of ballet back for many years. This argument is idiotic for it matters not what school a choreographer comes from provided what he creates is the best of its kind. Of what kind is it? Is it good of its kind?—that is the way one judges creative dance competitions. It so happened that the works based on the classical vocabulary were nothing like as good as this.

The second prize was awarded to Marise Desèvres for her:

Barbe-Bleue

First given at the Théâtre du Casino, Aix-les-Bains, on August 2, 1957, Choreography by Marise Desèvres. Book by Francois Guillot de Rode. Music by Jean Françaix. Designed by Claude Bleynie.

Cast

Barbe-Bleue	GERARD OHN
La Pure	ARIEL AUCLAIR
Tranquille	HELENE ILINA
Valseuse	MADY SIMONS
Piquante	MARIE-LAURE DUVAL
Papillonne	NICOLE DEHAY
Furiante	MURIEL REYMONDE
Souci	MATHEE SOUVERBIE

WHEN Bluebeard returned from the Orient he came back with a liking for the Eastern custom of keeping a harem. But the laws of the town where he acquired a castle forbade such a practice. He overcame this difficulty by pretending that he was a terrible, cruel and powerful lord who kills his wives when, in actual fact, he kept them in a harem. Really he had a horror of the methods of the English Henry VIII, who dispatched his wives; the truth was something quite different. It was the pure girl to whom he eventually turned, but was she really so?

THEMES which are "naughty" are the most difficult for the inexperienced. They can be the greatest fun in Offenbach operas or in Roland Petit ballets, but then both of these people were masters of their craft. Frankly I think that ballets of this kind are treading on dangerous territory, and I doubt the wisdom of Marise Desèvres basing her work on such a theme. The fact that Guillot de Rode's story is amusing had probably more than anything to do with this ballet being awarded second prize.

Although I was a judge, it would not, had I voted for twenty people, have received a prize from me for its choreography. The ballet was badly constructed, and the fact that dancers were frequently masking other dancers showed a lack of production craft. There was a certain competence in much of what we saw, but unless considerably re-worked the ballet would not stand a chance in a regular repertoire.

The saving grace of the whole occasion lay in Jean Françaix' witty score and in the performance given by all the dancers. Gérard Ohn played the title rôle with humour, and his commanding presence dominated the whole work. He received fine support from all the "wives." Had the work not been given with the Gallic wit and charm, it would not have been supportable.

Claude Bleynie's setting was simple and effective, with its central rostrum for Bluebeard's throne and with the wives' beds ranged down each side of the stage. It was not, however, particularly original and owed something, as so many French designers do, to the work of Clavé. French theatre designers have set such a high standard of taste and originality that somehow one always expects more than competence from them.

I don't know just how experienced Marise Desèvres is. Possibly she has created a number of works in France. I feel, though, that she would be well advised to concentrate on themes which are less complex, however simple they may appear on the surface. She has an obvious choreographic talent which needs to be

SECOND PRIZE TO BARBE-BLEUE: *Gérard Ohn, in the title rôle, surrounded by his harem, in Marise Desèvres' ballet, to Jean Françaix music and Claude Bleynie designs, which won the second prize.* *Photo: Lido*

disciplined. In her case, a few exercises in abstract works might help to rectify the faults she showed in this ballet.

Yet another comedy ballet was awarded the third prize which went to Jean Guelis for his:

Anjou 33.93

First given at the Théâtre du Casino, Aix-les-Bains, on August 3, 1957. Ballet by André Coffrant and Jean Guelis. Music by Yves Claoue. Designed by Jacques Camuratti. Choreography by Jean Guelis.

Cast

La Danseuse	DENISE BOURGEOIS
La Salutiste	DANIELLE DARMANCE
La Coquette	NICOLE DEHAYES
La Maniaque	JUDITH DORNYS
Le Maître Coiffeur	JEAN GUELIS
Les Aides Coiffeurs	PIERRE DUCHESNE
	DANIEL ASTIER

THE director of a beauty parlour (telephone number Anjou 33.93*) has extraordinary success with the fairer sex. His attraction is such that he is able to make rendezvous which are always accepted. The meetings take place in the home of this Don Juan which is isolated and a kind of laboratory full of fantasy. The conquest is bewitched and surprised by the unsuspected gifts of her lover.*

A series of mishaps bring three new conquests to the house of this master coiffeur. Confined and duped, these ladies unite in rebellion and plan to conquer this Don Juan by the same fate which awaited them.

ANOTHER "naughty" theme, designed more to provoke laughter rather than anything else. But this time the choreographer was more experienced. Admittedly the ballet was better designed to fit into a revue than into the repertoire of a ballet company, but of its kind it was extremely professional and amusing. Whether one agrees or not with ballets created for competitions of this kind being pure farce —and there were no rules for the elimination of such works—the jury are bound to be disarmed by anything that shows such an obviously professional approach to the art of the dance.

Guelis's choreography is slick and witty, and has obviously been inspired by the lighter creations of Roland Petit, but in many ways this new work was better constructed and had far more "body" than some of Petit's recent works in this *genre*.

He has designed his choregraphy around the special qualities of his dancers, and it was a pleasure to see that fine acrobatic dancer, Danielle Darmance (who used to be a prominent member of Les Ballet des Champs-Elysées) in the rôle of a tumbling Salvation Army lady. The great surprise came in the delightful comedy playing of Denise Bourgeois, who we usually associate with more serious rôles in the repertoire of the Marquis de Cuevas company. As an amorous ballerina, visiting this beauty salon with slightly different intentions, she was charming and danced with a wonderful sense of fun. Guelis created for himself a rôle which used his remarkable elevation, and he, too, revealed a nice sense of comedy.

Camuratti's setting mainly used objects from a hairdressing establishment, and his fantastic machines for changing the colour and hair-dos of the various ladies were ingenious pieces of stage mechanism.

THIRD PRIZE TO ANJOU 33.93*: Jean Guelis, centre, with Denise Bourgeois on his right and Judith Dornys on his left, in a moment from his ballet, to Yves Claoue music, which was awarded the third prize.* *Photo: Lido*

Other Entries

THE first prize-winner was easy to judge, but four out of the remaining five posed a number of problems, as each of them had certain qualities, yet none of them was so outstanding a whole as to make the second and third prize winners as decisive as one always hopes for in competitions. For instance, the ballet which opened the programme on the first night of these two performances, August 2, has, to my mind, many points of great merit. This was *Les Cuisiners Méchants* with choreography by Marcel Luipart on a book by Günter Grass, music by Horst Geldmacher and designs by Valtini. It was about four mischievious cooks who, after many pranks, are charmed by a goose, who eventually meets the fate of most birds when faced by most cooks.

Although the ballet bore some resemblance to Petit's *L'Oeuf à la Coq* in its subject matter, the resemblance went little further. The whole work had an almost Commedia dell' Arte quality. The movement was clear and original. Quite outstanding was the variation for the goose (*not* danced by Claire Sombert as the programme announced). In a quite amazing way, Luipart realised all the ponderous and cumbersome characteristics of the bird. The heavy flapping wings and the waddling gait were extremely expressive, even if a programme had not forewarned the spectator as to what bird she was supposed to be. Equally "goosey" was the music of Horst Geldmacher, which all through the work proved to be admirable ballet music and exactly what was required. Another amusing moment was a *grand adagio* of knives with the goose and four cooks; an extremely witty burlesque of the *Rose Adagio* from the first act of the *Sleeping Beauty*.

What particularly struck me about the whole ballet was its directness, its complete lack of padding and its general economy. It suffered from a rather weak ending.

The ballet received a polished and crisp performance, though Luipart has a very personal style which I would say needs dancers specially trained for it.

Valtini's setting consisted mainly of kitchen implements which formed an adequate and humourous background, though a little heavy in treatment.

My personal opinion was that as regards to the choreography, this was superior to at least

one of the works awarded a prize. It received a certain number of votes but not enough. It is possible that the French contingent on the jury, which was overwhelmingly in the majority, considered the ballet to bear a too close resemblance to Petit's ballet for it to be entirely original.

The work which followed on the opening evening was Jean-Bernard Lemoine's *Le Double* with music by Pierick Houdy and designed by Jean Devilles. The story, by Pierre Rhallys, was about two boys fighting over a girl. In order to stop them the girl intervenes, only to get killed in the process. The boy who really loves her buries the body in a hole in a wall. In his despair he calls on all the powers that be to bring her back to life. The girl reappears and the boy dances with her. Again the tragedy repeats itself, and the girl dies, but when the boy goes to bury her body in the hole in the wall, he finds the body of the first girl still there. Were they actually the same girl?

The idea is a most original one—perhaps not quite so original as some of Rhally's ideas that we have seen of late. Where I think the choreographer failed was in his too realistic interpretation of this fundamentally poetic idea. There was a certain heaviness where obviously an atmosphere of strangeness was required. Possibly the story was too strong and too difficult for an inexperienced choreographer.

The central rôle of the boy was created too much around the certain technical ability of Lemoine, who played it. The endless *pirouettes*, *tours en l'air* and general force became monotonous and failed to express the character of the obviously confused young man. Many of these steps were padding to fill in moments when it seemed as though he had run out of creative ideas. I am afraid that much of the fault for this lies in the school of Lifar, which has been Jean-Bernard Lemoine's main inspiration (he was a dancer at the Opéra and is now a principal male dancer at the Opéra Comique). Another fault was in the actual production, which was rather immature, nor did he use his crowds with any imagination.

Lemoine danced his rôle very well, even if his actual interpretation lacked any poetic feeling. He was well supported by Andréa Carlsen as the hapless girl who did all that could be done to bring the work into its correct focus.

Both the setting of Jean Devilles and the score of Houdy seemed to be impregnated by the heaviness which pervaded the whole work.

In future works, Jean-Bernard Lemoine should give greater consideration as to the suitability of the steps he uses. It is a temptation to use steps which he himself can perform to perfection, but are they what the ballet needs? This he should ask himself with every *enchaînement* he creates. He should pay more attention to floor pattern and the use of space; he should also think about the composition and relation of his *corps de ballet* to his protagonists. Like Marise Desèvres I think he would be wise to consider less complex themes for his first choreographic steps. A Béjart can most admirably use the ideas of Rhallys, but they are frankly too mature for a choreographer going through his first paces.

Unfortunately the final ballet shown at the competition on August 3 was hardly distinguished, nor was it representative in any way of America, which is Mary-Jo Weldon's native country. Her *Piano*, to Michel Emer music and designs by Robert Guiny, was very banal. A poor pianist, living in an attic, thinks back on the experiences and emotions of his youth. So discouraged is he by his present state and overwhelming need for money, that he takes to drink. In the end he is left with his only friend—his piano.

It was all highly melodramatic and quite embarrassing. The sight of an experienced dancer miming piano-playing, clutching his forehead and feverishly enacting the transference of his ideas on to scraps of paper was more comic than anything else, and reminded me of those after-dinner charades we used to play in our youth. In those days it was called Dumbcrambo, today I think it is called "the Game." Very entertaining in the drawing-room, but hardly the sort of thing one expects to see at an international competition. The work lacked any sense of professional production.

LES CUISINERS MECHANTS: *Four cooks and a goose in the ballet by Marcel Luipart to Horst Geldmacher music.* *Photo: Lido*

APART from the first prize winning ballet, the general standard of choreography throughout the competition was not as high as I had hoped for. On the other hand, even if only one important work emerges out of six, there is hardly anything to complain of. The organisers of the festival, and of this competition in particular, are to be congratulated on having made the first step in creating something which, if it continues annually, can play a vitally important part in the future of ballet. Such a venture has vision, and its international aspect can forge strong links in the chain which binds dancers and dance creators in every part of the globe.

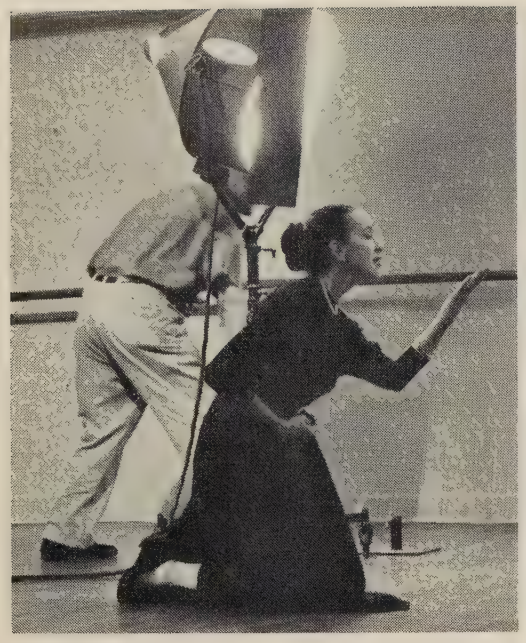
A new star?

BEFORE finally saying goodbye to Aix-les-Bains for 1957, I should mention one event which, although given during the choregraphic competition, really had nothing to do with it. This was the presentation of a new young potential star, Judith Dornys. In the second evening of the competition she danced the *Casse Noisette pas de deux* with Boris Trailine, who is her present teacher.

This young Hungarian girl has worked in Canada with Celia Franca's Canadian National Ballet. Now she is back in Europe being groomed for stardom by Trailine and, from what I could see from only this *pas de deux*, she seems to have all that it needs to reach, eventually, this exalted position.

She has a beautiful line, good technique and a most engaging stage presence. She still has a great deal to learn, but if she is developed slowly and not forced in any way, then here is an undoubted ballerina of tomorrow.

LE DOUBLE: *Andréa Carlsen (aloft r.) and Jean-Bernard Lemoine (aloft l.) in the latter's ballet to Pierich Houdy music and a story by Pierre Rhallys.* *Photo: Lido*



EXPLANATION FROM GRAHAM: Martha Graham acts as a commentator and explains her approach to the dance in the film A Dancer's World *recently made in America.*

GRAHAM'S COMPANY ON TV FILM: (L. to R.) Yuriko, Bertram Ross, Helen McGehee, Gene McDonald and Robert Cohan in front of the cameras during the filming of A Dancer's World.

American dance films make news

Two films—Martha Graham's *A Dancer's World* for television, and Ruth St. Denis's *The First Lady of American Dance*—bring the pioneers of American Modern Dance before a wider public than has ever occurred before.

by ARTHUR TODD

TWO half-hour films concerned entirely with dance recently have been previewed in America. Though widely different in approach, each is noteworthy because of its concept and each is of international importance since one features Martha Graham, the other Ruth St. Denis.

A Dancer's World

THIS black and white thirty-minute film starring Martha Graham and her company was originally commissioned by WQED, the television station in Pittsburgh, and it must be added at once that this is perhaps the most important and most creative effort to define dance that has yet been presented in the medium of television. Unfortunately, Graham does not dance in this film. Rather, she serves as a guide from her theatrical dressing room where we first discover her making up for a performance.

Speaking of herself and her dancers, she says: "Dance is communication and the great desire is to speak clearly, beautifully and with inevitability." After introducing dancers Yuriko, Helen McGehee, Gene McDonald, Ellen Siegel, Robert Cohan, Miriam Cole, David Wood, Lillian Biersteker, Bertram Ross, Ethel Winter and Mary Hinkson, they show how, in Miss Graham's words, "The dancer cultivates an awareness . . . learns flexibility and control . . . masters the turn of the body on its axis . . . (and) strengthens the legs for the daring of the leap."

The film then reverts to four other sequences with Martha Graham between which are spaced more complex, more technically developed dance patterns during which she also speaks and explains: "A dancer . . . is the divine normal. He does what the human body is capable of doing." . . . "You are in competition with one person only and that is the individual you know you can become." . . . "And when a dancer is at the peak of his powers he has two lovely, fragile, perishable things . . . spontaneity . . . simplicity . . . it is the state of complete simplicity 'costing no less than everything' of which Mr. T. S. Eliot speaks."

Everyone connected with this television film is deserving of special credit: producer Nathan Kroll; director and photographer Peter Glushanok; camera operator Stanley Meredith; film editor Eleanore Morrow and Cameron McCosh who composed and played the musical accompaniment. This film is now ready for general release and is being distributed by Rembrandt Films. Judging by the acclaim of the preview audience, one can see that this film should be of equally great interest to television audiences as to art theatre patrons, to all those either seriously or even casually interested in the dance and, most certainly, to all the rest of the world that shows an increasing interest in the dance theatre of Martha Graham. This film makes the viewer even more eager for the next project being planned under the same auspices: Martha Graham and her Dance Company in a full-length colour version of Aaron Copland's *Appalachian Spring*.

First Lady of American Dance

THIS full-colour thirty-minute feature presents Ruth St. Denis, pioneer and prophet of American Dance, in four of her most famous solo dances—*White Jade, Black and Gold Sari, Cobra* and *Yogi*, all of which are of great historic interest since they were composed thirty or more years ago during the great period of the Denishawn Company. Since Ruth St. Denis is herself timeless, she recreates these famous rôles with all the freshness and excitement of earlier performances. Even more miraculously, she appears younger and more radiant than most of the so-called glamour girls of Hollywood in the four spoken prologues that preface and introduce each of these solos. In these she speaks with delicious wit and wisdom, sketching in the background of each dance and telling how she conceived it.

Especially noteworthy is the constantly lovely *White Jade*, full of its exquisite hand movements, its gracefully lyric arms, its completely plastic quality. When one realises that there is no like record of Ruth St. Denis's contemporary, Isadora Duncan, one can be thankful that these films have managed to capture the very essence of St. Denis's rare art. One senses almost immediately, too, how these solos and their prologues could form the nucleus for a full-length documentary film on this great American dance spirit.

The dance world should feel deeply indebted to William Skipper, of William Skipper Productions Inc., who instigated this important colour film project. The entire production was supervised by Marcus Blechman, William J. Kelly was responsible for the photography, and the musical score was arranged and conducted by Harry John Brown. When this film was previewed before an invited audience of UNESCO delegates, an entire Eastern delegation arose and applauded at the conclusion. Since dance apparently speaks so international a language, one hopes that the U.S. State Department will note and consider the infinite possibilities of a film like this.

About Ruth St. Denis

AS Ruth St. Denis is not well known to present-day European audiences, here are some notes about her career:

"Miss Ruth," as she is affectionately known, was born in New Jersey in 1877. Having attempted a number of remarkably different careers she decided to devote herself to the dance in 1904. She was drawn to the Hindoo dance and created a ballet, *Radha*, in 1906. She had an instant success. She toured her oriental dances across Europe and America for many years. In 1914, Ted Shawn became her partner and together they founded Denishawn, a school which also became the nucleus of a company. This organisation, which has played a vital part in American dance, lasted until 1932. Although in semi-retirement, she devoted herself to the dance in many ways and in 1941 she made a remarkable come-back at Jacob's Pillow and, later, in a trans-American tour.

Yogi

White Jade

Four studies of Ruth St. Denis

by Marcus Blechman

Like her great predecessor, Isadora Duncan, Ruth St. Denis strove to free the dance from the confines of traditional ballet. Through her understanding of the Orient she recognised the spiritual power of the dance. She and Ted Shawn are the main link between Duncan and the American Modern Dancers of today.

Black and Gold Sari

Cobra

AWARD: Anton Dolin being presented with the Royal Academy of Dancing's Queen Elizabeth II Coronation Award by Dame Adeline Genée-Isitt. This plaque is awarded annually for outstanding service to ballet during the year. Others to receive this award have been Dame Ninette de Valois, Tamara Karsavina and Marie Rambert. Dame Adeline was president of the R.A.D. from 1920 until 1945, when she retired to be replaced by Dame Margot Fonteyn. *Photo: Brian Worth*

CONGRATULATIONS: Serge Lifar (one from right) congratulates the winners of the International Competition of Young Choreographers at the Festival of Aix-les-Bains. (L. to r.) Jean Guelis (winner of the third prize), Dimitris Parlic (choreographer from Belgrade and next year's vice-president of the Congress), Deryk Mendel (winner of the first prize), Lifar (president of next year's Congress) and Marise Desèvres (winner of the second prize). *Photo: Georges Brun*

curtain up!

No throats cut

"CUT-THROAT seasons," everybody said about the fact that four dance companies would appear in London at the same time during August. Not at all! The two Spanish companies—Pilar Lopez Ballet Español and the new Ximenez-Vargas company—did wonderful business at the Palace Theatre and at Sadler's Wells. Each time I went to see either there were long queues waiting to buy tickets. At Covent Garden the Royal Ballet, during its farewell two-week season before leaving for America, played to fair business. But at Festival Hall, London's Festival Ballet was playing to fantastic houses: night after night the "sold out" sign was displayed, and large numbers were unable to obtain seats. A quite formidable achievement considering the capacity of the hall is nearly 3,300, and the company played there for two months. The remarkable thing was that even the matinees were sold out, and at one performance over 400 people were turned away.

I have, over the past few months, had reason to doubt that London's claim of being the capital of the dance was still valid. Now all doubts are dispelled.

Tchaikovsky material for Russia

JUST before she left for American I received a letter from Dame Margot Fonteyn. She enclosed the copy of a letter she had been sent by the Director of the National House-Museum of Tchaikovsky, Klin, Moscow. It reads thus:

"Deeply respected Mrs. Margot Fonteyn. Looking through the magazine DANCE AND DANCERS, we notice with deep satisfaction what an important place in English ballet is occupied by the music and ballets of Tchaikovsky.

"The National House-Museum of Tchaikovsky collects everything which relates to the great master, including all that shows survival of his work and genius in our day.

"We address ourselves to you and through you to the society of British choreographers with the plea to help the House-Museum of the great composer to collect all the existing material about ballet productions to Tchaikovsky music, choreographer's charts, drawings of the scenery and costumes, theatre bills, programmes, notices, and photographs of productions, producers and dancers. We should very much like to have the photographs of the principal female and male dancers with their autographs.

"The Soviet people deeply respect the memory of the great composer and are greatly interested about the 'life' of his music in the West. Tens of thousands of our citizens yearly visit our museum and take great interest in studying all the material we possess about the life and creative art of Tchaikovsky. We thank you in advance for your reply,

Signed: JOURAVLEV."

If any readers have any material which they think would be of value to this museum, I hope that they will send it. If it is easier, we shall be very pleased to send gifts through the offices of DANCE AND DANCERS.

Out and in again

IF you have ever heard a rowing coach on the bank of a river shouting at a crew, "In, out, in, out," you will get some idea of Elaine Fifield's progress with the Borovansky Ballet in Australia.

After having left the Royal Ballet and returned to her native country, we heard that she had settled down nicely in her new company and was getting excellent notices from the critics. This was followed by a rumour that she had "walked out" of the company for reasons not specified. Now I hear that she has returned again; this time, perhaps, for good.

In addition to rôles such as Odette in *Swan Lake*, the Sugar Plum Fairy in *The Nutcracker*, the title rôle in Cranko's *Pineapple Poll*, and the rôle of Francesca in David Lichine's *Francesca da Rimini*, she has already appeared in *Giselle*. Her Albrecht was Kenneth Melville, former member of the Royal Ballet and of Festival Ballet, who used to dance this rôle with Violetta Elvin at Covent Garden.

Fifield remarked to my correspondent that her aim now is to forget all about technique and concentrate on artistry and expressiveness.

Architects on the move

BY a strange coincidence, the two architects of British ballet—Dame Ninette de Valois and Marie Rambert—left England within a few hours of each other. Both were going ahead to blaze the trail for the tours of their respective companies in far-flung places. Not that Dame Ninette has to do much blazing of trails, because the Royal Ballet is almost a national institution in America, where it is now in the process of a five-month coast-to-coast tour.

Marie Rambert left London on August 31 for the long journey to Pekin. Going by sea to Leningrad, train to Moscow, and then on by train to Pekin, she was expected to arrive in China just ahead of her Ballet Rambert, which opened in Pekin on September 9.

This is pioneering in the best possible sense. The works chosen by the Chinese to be given during the tour are: *Giselle*, *Coppélia*, *Winter Night*, *Les Sylphides*, *Gala Performance* and *Pas de Déesses*. All of them, I gather, being performed in most of the Chinese cities—which also include Hankow, Shanghai and Tientsin—for the first time. I wonder very much if the advent of a Western classical ballet company

will affect the subjects and technique of the notable Chinese dance troupes, which visit Europe.

Elvin run to earth

MOST lovers of ballet in England have recently been very concerned about the silence which has descended on Violetta Elvin's life since she retired from the Royal Ballet over two years ago. Determined as ever where a news-item is concerned, the *Daily Express* has at last run her to earth in Italy, and secured an interview with her.

It is good to know that she is well and safe after the spate of alarmist rumours which were circulating this summer. At the time of writing she had not married the Italian to whom she has been engaged for some time. During her ten years in England, Elvin endeared herself particularly to British audiences, who would always be delighted to welcome her back at any time she returned either for work or pleasure.

Danes go home

ANOTHER dancer from overseas who has warmed English hearts is Toni Lander. When she made her last appearance with Festival Ballet before taking a rest on her doctor's advice, no announcement was made about her imminent departure in the middle of their Festival Hall season. In spite of this, word got around in the strange way that it does in the world of ballet. There was no doubt, from the very personal reception she received, of the affection for her felt by both the audience and the company.

After a long rest it is possible that she will return to the Royal Danish Ballet as guest artist for the first performances of Lander's revival of his *Etudes* early next year. But there seems every likelihood that Toni Lander will return to Festival Ballet in time for their South American tour next spring.

The other member of the Danish contingent in Festival Ballet—Flemming Flindt—will also not be dancing with the company for some months. He has been suffering from a knee injury for some time, and he, too, has been ordered a rest and is returning to Denmark.

New works ahead

FOR well over a year no new works have been given by the Royal Ballet (formerly Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet); now it is again embarking on a series of new creations. The first of these will be given when the company comes to Covent Garden for its Christmas season. This is *The Blue Rose*, with choreography by Peter Wright, who was recently Ballet Master of the opera ballets at Sadler's Wells Theatre. Wright has danced with a number of British companies, but will mainly be remembered for his performances as a member of the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet. Among his previous choreographic creations was a ballet for the Wells Choreographic Group—*Under Canvas*. The music for the new work is by Samuel Barber, and the designs are by Yolande Sonnabend, a student at the Slade school.

In addition to this ballet, there are to be creations from John Cranko and Kenneth MacMillan, but whether these will be given during the Covent Garden season has not yet been announced.

Rambert's provincial supporters

AFTER the opening night of the Ballet Rambert season at Sadler's Wells Theatre, there was a party at which Marie Rambert was presented with the Legion d'Honneur, which we previously announced as having been awarded to her. Rambert looked stunned and happy, then she called out in a clear voice, "Vive la France!" Surely the shortest speech that Rambert has ever made in public.

An interesting point of this occasion was that Rambert invited representatives from most of the ballet clubs in the country to both the performance and the party. Many turned up from as far afield as Tyneside, North Wales and Northern Ireland. Reason? It is the ballet clubs who support Ballet Rambert in the provinces.

Festival's friends form club

FESTIVAL Ballet has also discovered the importance of ballet clubs in forming an audience. Last April, London's Festival Ballet Club started with only sixty members. Quite independent of the company's management, the group was organised by a number of enthusiasts —with Rosser James as chairman and Shirley Gooden as secretary—who wanted to make a serious study of the art of ballet. Today the membership is approaching the 500 mark. The members have already enjoyed lectures and talks from dancers in the company, Louis Godfrey has shown films and Franklin White, of the Royal Ballet, and Irina Baronova have lectured to the club. I hear that a branch is already being formed in Birmingham, and others are projected.

Education recognises ballet

ANOTHER way to get an audience is to tap the vast resources of the secondary schools. Festival Ballet is sponsoring lectures throughout the provinces during their autumn tour. I hear that the lecturers, which include Anton Dolin, will talk about general ballet subjects as well as those of historical interest, and that discussions will be promoted concerning the works which Festival Ballet is showing during the tour.

This new policy was started early this year, and large parties from the secondary schools have visited the company at the Festival Hall. Anton Dolin tells me that educational circles are very interested in the scheme and that every lecture is given under the auspices of the educational authority in each area.

Making records

IN January 1950 DANCE AND DANCERS first appeared. Since that time, Hansom Books has enlarged its family at regular intervals and we now have in addition: MUSIC AND MUSICIANS, PLAYS AND PLAYERS, FILMS AND FILMING and BOOKS AND BOOKMEN.

Starting with the October number, RECORDS AND RECORDING will make its appearance and all details about it can be found on pages 40 and 41 of this issue. This new publication should have a special appeal to lovers of the dance because recorded music, and specially ballet music, has become an integral part of the lives of all those who admire the lively arts. The magazine's editor, Evan Senior (also editor of MUSIC AND MUSICIANS) tells me that RECORDS AND RECORDING is not a specialised and highly technical magazine, but is designed for everyone who loves records and recorded music in the home.

happy birthday to...

		October
Shirley Grahame	Royal Ballet	24
David Kerval	Canadian National Ballet	25
Norman McDowell	Netherlands Ballet	26
Elaine Fifield	Borovansky Ballet	28
Elaine Thomas	Royal Ballet	28
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		November
Donald McAlpine	Festival Ballet	4
Violetta Elvin	In retirement in Italy	4
Sally Lewis	Royal Ballet	4
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Hylda Zinkin	Royal Ballet	19

Dancer You Will Know

Photo: John Chesworth

LUCETTE ALDOUS

BORN in Auckland, New Zealand. Went to Australia when 4 months old. Her first teacher was Jean Nicholas in Newcastle, Australia. She later studied with Phyllis Danahar in Brisbane, and with Kathleen Danetree at the Francis Sculley School in Sydney. She won the Francis Sculley Memorial Scholarship and came to England in late 1955. *She went to the Royal Ballet School, and made her stage début at Covent Garden as a negro page in* The Sleeping Beauty. *She joined the Ballet Rambert in April*, 1957.

Rôles: Peasant pas de deux *in* Giselle; *Dawn in* Coppélia.

TRADITIONALLY—with the best fishermen—the one that got away was always a whopper. Lucette Aldous is diminutive, a baby ballerina if ever there was one. When the Rambert new production of *Coppélia* was first given in London, everyone after the performance seemed to be talking about the young girl who had with smooth confidence, sensitive musicality and a fresh, unforced personality, just danced the most enjoyable Dawn variation to be seen in years. Yet the most remarkable thing about her was that she had passed through the Royal Ballet School without having been seized on by either of the two Royal companies.

That her Dawn was no flash in the pan became evident the following week when she danced the peasant *pas de deux* in *Giselle*, showing much the same qualities that had distinguished her before. Just as long as we can turn out delightful dancers like Lucette Aldous there need be no fears for the future.

Illustration 47

Petit Battement *Tombé* *Jeté*

STEPS OF THE DANCE 28

by

BARBARA VERNON and JOHN GREGORY

Illustrated by EILEAN PEARCEY

BARRE IN THE CENTRE

Group 4: PETITS BATTEMENTS

THE *Petit Battement* is the preparatory movement for acquiring the sideways beat of the *entrechat*. Most people attempting an *entrechat* in the beginning allow their legs to fly forwards and backwards, instead of opening and closing their legs with a sideways movement.

The *Petit Battement* is a difficult exercise to teach, and requires careful analysis. The working leg is held open from the thigh in the *sur le cou de pied* position. The foot when on the ankle front is hugging the ankle bone of supporting leg, heel in front, toe pointing backwards. Without moving the thigh the lower leg makes a swinging movement in which it travels continuously between *cou de pied* front and back. The impetus comes entirely from the knee which is quite relaxed. The foot which is stretched but not tense, travels close to the supporting leg, and stretches to the full when at the back. The movement must be precise, yet easy.

Petit Battement may be combined with turning steps, small jumps or *Grand Pirouettes*. Used as a prefix to the *enchaînement* it may become an ornamental introduction to the sentence of dance.

Petit Battement may be executed *simple*, *en plié*, *en rélevé sur la demi-pointe*, and with accents front or back. It may also be executed *en promenade en dehors* or *en dedans*.

Emboité: A jumping step commencing from 5th position, and springing on alternate legs with a half-turn of the body, the back leg passing continuously to *cou de pied* in front. With a strongly accented upwards movement the spring into the air must be sufficient to enable the feeling of stepping down into the air with each change of leg. The arm corresponding to the working leg is carried from 4th to 2nd position simultaneously with the movement of the leg, with each half-turn. *Emboité* is generally used as a travelling step *en diagonal*; head spotting to the corner towards which you are travelling.

Piqué with Petit Battement half-turn: From *plié* in 5th position, forward arm in 2nd other arm in 4th position, working leg opens to *à la seconde* fully stretched. With a push from supporting leg weight is transferred to it. As it steps diagonally forwards to *demi-pointe en effacé*, the other leg is picked up to *cou de pied* with a *petit battement* back-front *en croisé*. Arm corresponding to the forward leg opens to 4th position as it steps *en piqué*, the other arm comes across to 2nd position. Head looks over forward shoulder. The movement repeats on the other leg. From *plié* on supporting leg, the *cou de pied* leg steps forward diagonally *en croisé* to *demi-pointe*, and the body turns half-turn to complete the circle, as the leg which was supporting leg is picked up to *cou de pied* with *petit battement* back-front. The arms also change simultaneously to the original position, front arm to 2nd, other arm to 4th position.

Tombé, Jeté, Tombé Entournant: From 5th position or *sur la cou de pied* the front leg drops forward *tombé* to 4th position *en effacé*, forward arm in 2nd position, other arm in 4th position.

Two methods of execution:

(1) The body makes a half-turn as the back leg brushes through 1st position to *à la seconde en l'air*, to make *Jeté* with back to audience, head looking over forward shoulder. The body completes the full turn as the working leg passes to *cou de pied* front, to drop again in *Tombé en effacé*.

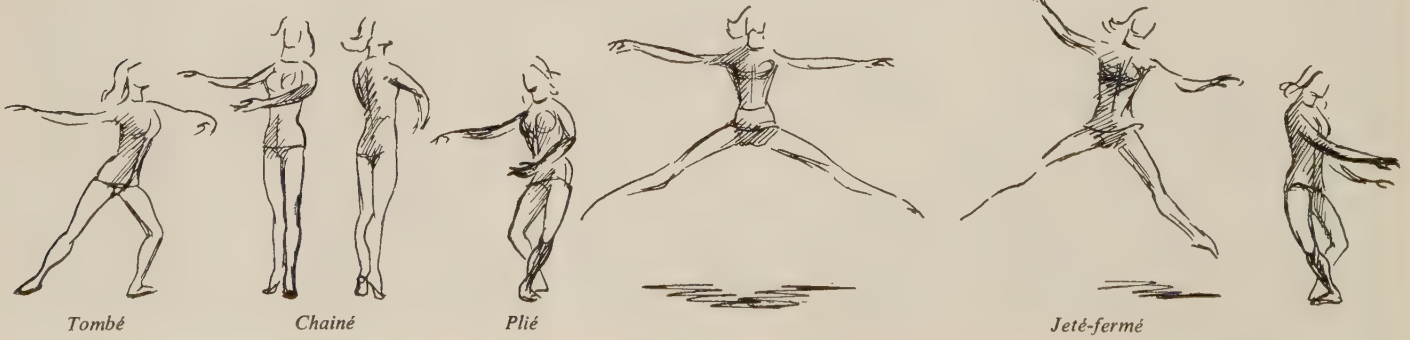
(2) The back leg is thrown with a brush through 1st position to 4th position front *en l'air*, and with a push from supporting leg the body turns full turn to land on *Jeté*. The other leg is picked up to *cou de pied* front and passes forward to *Tombé en effacé* in 4th position. The head is used sharply; the body faces in the direction of travel. As the turn in the air is made, the arms are gathered to 2nd position.

Chainé is a continuous turning step on the *demis-pointes* or *pointes* in 1st position. From *plié* in 5th position the front leg opens to the side and steps on to *demi-pointe*, the body making a half-turn as the other leg joins it in 1st position to continue and complete the turn; thus the legs are joined like one, and the effect is of rolling. To put it another way: when the body has half-turned on the front leg, the other leg steps in to 1st position and another half-turn is executed on this leg. In each case the leg which does not carry the weight of the body is lifted just off the floor in 1st position. The arms are held rounded at waist level. The head spots in the direction of travel.

The *Chainé* may also commence from 4th position *en effacé en plié*, from which position the back leg steps up to 1st position on *demi-pointe* as the body half-turns, and the *chainé* continues as described. It is important to pull up knees, and lift body in the waist with very straight back. A slight pressure in the forward shoulder-blade is helpful for maintaining equilibrium.

Jeté Fermé de Côté: From *plié* in 5th position working leg is thrown wide to the side and with a strong push from supporting leg travels to the side landing in *Jeté*; other leg closing after in 5th position. In the air the legs open wide, as near splits as possible, and the arms open outwards to 4th position.

continued on opposite page



Tombé *Chainé* *Plié* *Jeté-fermé*

So You Want to Dance?

A Teacher of Character Dancing

THE term character dancing has been used so elastically that it has almost ceased to have any useful meaning. Here it is used in its national or folk dance sense, whether the dances referred to are completely authentic national dances, or restyled for the purposes of ballet as in *Prince Igor* and in the Mlakars' *The Devil in the Village*.

As Maria Zybina has had the dual careers of classical dancer and folk dancer, she is well qualified to supply material on the teaching of character dances and give advice to ballet teachers who have had no training in this branch of tuition. She has, moreover, been so fortunate as to have lived in many countries, including Finland, Sweden, Holland, Germany, Austria, Greece, Hungary, Italy and Yugoslavia, and in each of these she has learned and collected the dances.

Although she was born in Moscow, she began her ballet training in Berlin at Eugenia Eduardowa's school. Eduardowa was a pupil of Gerdt, and she had the reputation of being one of the finest character dancers in Russia. Zybina also studied with Preobrajenska and Nicholas Legat, becoming first soloist with the State Ballet in Belgrade, and eventually principal dancer. But with the German invasion she was interned in Split in Dalmatia. After the liberation by the "partisans" she was at once appointed principal ballet mistress to the State Theatre, where she produced both ballet and opera. In 1946 she came to live in this country.

In addition to increasing one's understanding of other races, one of the uses of character dance is that it widens one's knowledge of the first form of known dance: dance which originates from the natural instinct in peoples to express their feelings and temperaments.

"I have often been asked," says Madame Zybina, "which are the easiest national dances to teach. Well, all the varieties of polka steps are interesting and most suitable for an inexperienced teacher. But some of them have to be danced with gaiety and speed, and some elegantly and gracefully, always remembering that with each forward sweep of the leg one is supposed to lift the bottom of the long skirt just enough to show the shoe. If one does not know something of the history and background of the dance, one may just not be able to obtain the right atmosphere and freedom and breaking through of temperament, combined with wit, *but without losing the simplicity of style*, and may, therefore, just as well teach a classical polka."

One may not get any results for a long time with dancers who have never studied ballet. While one can easily work from ballet into national dances, one must first of all free the mind and body of classical style. The special strong character *barre* exercises which were used by Gerdt in Russia were created for ballet-trained dancers, but there are also ballet character *barre* exercises as used by folk dance groups in all countries under Russian influence. These exercises are very valuable in giving national groups the ballet foundations needed.

Dancers, she says, with a sound classical technique often tend to think that it is sufficient and imagine character dancing to be a mere stamping of the feet and flinging about of the arms and body, and that it can be danced, if required, without any special training. Those who think this are very far from realising how much precision and control are embodied in the technique of a good character dancer.

The teacher can expect a very big result after a short period of classes, especially in bringing out personality in some of the shyer pupils and in helping the slow learner of classical ballet. The varied rhythms and nuances of movement which differentiate dances of various nations, and also their speed and broad movement, can help students in presentation, feeling and expression in ballet.

But apart from any benefits which character dancing can bring to classical ballet, it is well worth teaching for its own sake. "It is quite possible," says Zybina, "to bring out the right temperament in an English student because I have done it over and over again. Mind, it is not possible to do it with every pupil: some just cannot adapt themselves to it and allow their feeling to come out, but some do it really perfectly."

Inexperienced teachers, she says, should really not attempt to arrange dances to Brahms's *Hungarian Dances*, just because one of their pupils has a nice national costume, and adjudicators without special experience should not attempt to judge national dances. If a teacher is prepared to take an active interest, her best and quickest plan is to study the dances from authentic sources. That is to study with dancers from other countries (and there are many in London), or go to the countries themselves and learn something about the dances. And to achieve a reasonable knowledge, Zybina says, does not take nearly as long as in classical ballet. A slower and less reliable method is to study the dances in the library, but this is almost like studying ballet from books, and without the personal advice and experience of a teacher. Most of the 30 titles in the *National Dances of Europe* series (Max Parrish Ltd.) are extremely helpful. They contain useful introductions explaining the dances' origins, the steps and music, and colour reproductions of the costumes.

MARIA ZYBINA
Photo: Maurice Lindon

Correct costumes are very important, too, because even their colours have been influenced by the history, climate and living conditions of the people. In countries where there have been centuries of violence, or persecution of people who happen to be dominated by another race, or economic despair among the ordinary workers and peasants, and so on, one usually finds much darker colours and the dances themselves may even be melancholy. This is in contrast to freer countries where one finds lighter and gayer colours and dances which may have an innate sense of comedy or folkbuffoonery. One could not, for instance, imagine any Spanish dance without its traditional costume. And so often the very special and exact use of the skirt forms part of the movements of the dance.

Madame Zybina, however, does not permit skirts to be worn in her classes before the wide gliding and smooth movements have been mastered without throwing the body up and down. So much depends on the action of the knee, and this could be neither seen nor corrected under a skirt. Many accurate reproductions of national costumes appear in books such as Bradshaw's *World Costumes* (A. & C. Black).

"But," she says, "I cannot overstress the necessity of pupils being taught something of the background, region and historical traditions of the dances they are studying. Only through this knowledge will they be able to impart the right 'character' to the dance in their presentation."

The public is still uneducated about folk dance, and there is no doubt that many people prefer, say, a stage version of a mazurka, even though it is not danced by any race on this earth. After the visit of the Yugoslav State Ballet to Edinburgh there was criticism is one of the leading papers to the effect that the dances were dull because they all seemed to be

continued on page 42

STEPS OF THE DANCE

continued from opposite page

Petit Battement is frequently used in *enchaînement* with *Allegro* steps such as *Assemblé*, *Jeté*, *Si-sol*, *Ballonné*, *Brisé*, *Pas de Basque*, *Pas de Chat*, etc., all of which will be fully described in the *Allegro* series.

Examples of Enchainements incorporating Petits Battements

(*a*) 2 *Petits Battements*. Counts and 1, and 2,
Glissade under. Counts and 3,
Glissade over. Counts and 4,
Tombé forward *en effacé-Coupé*. Counts and 1 and 2,
Assemblé under. Counts and 3.
Repeat on other side.

(*b*) 3 *Petits Battements*. Counts and 1, and 2, and 3,
Tombé, 3 *Chainé* turns. Counts and 1, and 2 and 3,
Plié, *Piqué en Arabesque*. Counts and 1, and 2,
Close *sur le cou de pied* front. Counts and 3.
Repeat on other side.

(*c*) *Petit Battements*. Counts and 1, and 2, and 3,
Plié, *Piqué* to *cou de pied* with half-turn and *petit Battement*. Counts and 1, and 2,
Plié, *Piqué* to *cou de pied* with half-turn and *petit battement*. Counts and 3, and 4,
2 *Emboités* turning. Counts and 1, and 2,
Jeté fermé de côté. Counts and 3, and 4.
Repeat on the other side.

(*d*) 2 *Petits Battements*. Counts and 1, and 2,
Tombé, *Jeté*, *entournant*, *Tombé*. Counts and 3, and 4,
Failli. Counts and 1,
Pas de Basque back. Counts and 2,
Pirouette en dehors finishing *sur le cou de pied* front *en plié*. Counts and 3, and 4.
Repeat on the other side.

The next series will deal with *Allegro*.

Jaron Yaltan

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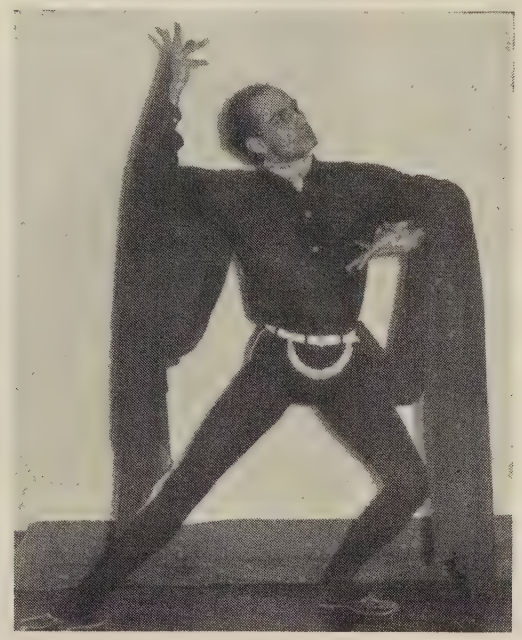

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BALLET RAMBERT AT SADLER'S WELLS

Heights regained

IT is difficult to explain precisely why the Ballet Rambert made such a favourable impression when it appeared at the Sadler's Wells Theatre for a fortnight's season opening on July 30. That ballet companies, like fairground roller-coasters, have their ups and downs is only too evident, as is the fact that the Ballet Rambert is now enjoying an "up." But the explanation of their climb cannot be ascribed, as is usually the case, to the production of any particularly successful ballet, or even to the discovery of any unusually spectacular dancers.

Choreographically speaking the days of Tudor are gone, and there has not been so much as a new Gore, Cranko, or MacMillan to gloat upon. As far as dancers are concerned, memories of Gore, Staff, Gilpin, Gilmour, Hinton—to consider only the past decade—outshine, perhaps unjustly, the company's present stars. Yet the Ballet Rambert is stronger now than it has been in the past ten years, even perhaps since before the war.

The reason for this is, I think, a new quality to be found in the general company. In the time of Gilmour or Hinton there was a thin upper crust of quite outstanding talent. Yet the standards of the rest of the company were by no means always high. The present company appears to possess a high standard of accomplishment throughout. This, together with careful production, enabled the company as a whole to give some splendid performances.

Opening programme

THE first programme, however, opened none too promisingly with a rather frozen *Winter Night*. Ann Horn was admirably direct and sincere as the cast-off love. Her portrayal differs from her predecessors in the part by being emotionally less highly coloured. Its tight-lipped understatement gave poignancy to the moments when her underlying passion broke to the surface, but it is a performance a good deal more subtle in its variations of mood than the Rachmaninov 2nd Piano Concerto to which the ballet is danced.

Norman Dixon, dancing and partnering very well, was dramatically sound as the man choosing his new love and rejecting his old, yet did not stress quite sufficiently the character's conflict within himself. Patricia Dyer danced charmingly as the brave new love, but lacked the bright radiance and touch of animal sensuality needed to provide the contrast with the older woman. Strangely enough, considering the impression made by the rest of the repertory, the *corps de ballet* seemed under-rehearsed.

Andrée Howard's new ballet *Conte Fantastique*, the second work on the first night programme is reviewed elsewhere. It was followed by John Cranko's *Variations on a Theme*, which has been seen so infrequently in London that this also almost had the interest of a première. In some ways this production with its symbolic narrative of a man finding salvation through simplicity, is Cranko's most interesting production to date. It has complete integrity, the choreography is varied and expressive, and the work is one of the few British ballets to show a genuine awareness of contemporary life.

As in Cranko's earlier, and now apparently lost, *Harlequin in April*, there are moments when both theme and choreography are drowned in a murky sea of symbolism, but for the most part *Variations on a Theme* makes its points clearly and succinctly. The anti-feminist satire of the Girl with the Flame, the Girl with the Scissors, and the Girl with the Shadow, for example, is completely admirable. In fact the only people likely to find the ballet dark in meaning and obscure in intention, are those who resolutely refuse to bring their brains to ballet performances, presumably leaving them outside in the cloakroom.

John Chesworth in the part of the Young Man, originally danced by Alexander Bennett, failed to project the character as well as did his predecessor. He was too withdrawn, seeming more like a spectator than a protagonist. As a result the focus of the ballet was shifted slightly, and the subsidiary dancers came more clearly into the picture. The cast proved excellent. Patricia Dyer gave a sympathetic account of the Child who eventually gives the Young Man hope, without ever becoming cloying. Patricia Ashworth, Ann Horn and Valerie Marsh all excelled, and I noted particularly the bright promise of Jennifer Dodd as the Girl with the Scissors.

Kenneth Rowell's decaying no-man's-land of a setting serves the ballet well, but I am less happy about some of the costumes which tend to be fussy in detail.

Gala Performance, with which the first programme ended, came with a distinct disappointment. I had the shocked feeling of meeting an old friend who had, since the last time I saw him, developed the most distressing mannerisms and affectations. Antony Tudor's satire on a 19th century gala performance is both acrid and, in a sense, affectionate. Never should it be a burlesque or romp; the comedy is intended to be pointed rather than broad.

In 1946 when Ballet Theatre first brought their production of the work to London, we all lamented the vulgarity of the American presentation, and smugly pointed towards the Ballet Rambert, where the humour was still preserved in all its pristine subtlety. But now it seems as though the Rambert have decided to out-Herod even that Herod, and are now hamming it with the worst of them.

Principal offenders were Patricia Ashworth, Gillian Martlew and John Chesworth, but the performance as a whole seemed rather cheap

FRENCH BALLERINA IN COPPELIA*: Norman Dixon, as Frantz, with Violette Verdy as Swanilda in the new Rambert* Coppélia. *Verdy joined Rambert as guest ballerina for the Sadler's Wells season.* *Photo: John Chesworth*

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and mucky. Like the Royal Ballet's treatment of *Pineapple Poll*, burlesque has got itself confused with comedy. The audience gave every evidence of loving it—so perhaps I'm just being a stuffed-shirt. One dancer I did like very much was the Greek boy Ian Metsis as the French cavalier; this rôle has not been danced so well since Gilpin left in 1947.

One of the main events of the season was the company's first full-length production of *Coppélia*.

COPPELIA

First produced by the Ballet Rambert in London on August 1, 1957, at the Sadler's Wells Theatre. Choreography: Ivanov after Saint-Léon. Music: Delibes. Decor and Costumes: M.V. Doboujinsky.

Cast

Dr. Coppelius	NORMAN MORRICE
Frantz	NORMAN DIXON
Swanilda	VIOLETTE VERDY
Dawn	LUCETTE ALDOUS
Prayer	ANN HORN
Peasant Dance—Hymen	PATRICIA ASHWORTH, JOHN CHESWORTH
Work	SHEILA ALLETSON, SYLVIA SINGLETON THELMA LITSTER, OLWEN HOUGHT

ALTHOUGH the last act of this production, first given as a separate entity, had been seen in the outer suburbs, the production as a whole was new to London. It seems regrettable that our one *avant-garde* company should have been forced into the field of full-length classical revivals, but the box-office is a hard taskmaster, and *Coppélia* is obviously a highly marketable commodity which no self-respecting ballet company can afford to be without.

Having expressed doubts about the desirability of the thing being done at all, it must be admitted that it has been done well. The choreography follows fairly closely the old Sadler's Wells version, i.e. that given before the changes introduced a few years ago by Dame Ninette de Valois, that effected a compromise between the realistic Danish approach and the sugar-candy classicism of the old Sergueeff version.

With the present production the sugar-candy is well to the fore once again. The choreography is ascribed, rather curiously I thought, to Ivanov. It is, in fact, based on Cecchetti's reworking of Petipa's 1884 version. The Rambert décor and costumes have been designed by the veteran Maryinsky artist Mstislav Doboujinsky, and are derived in part from the designs he produced for the Lithuanian Ballet seen in London before the war.

Doboujinsky sees the ballet in terms of Russian fantasy, and within those references the designs are effective. Personally I have always felt that 19th century ballet should be conceived as a period piece, but I was nearly won over by the delightfully fanciful elaboration Doboujinsky has given to the second act. Here was a truly magical setting for Coppelius's art. The scene showing the public square, used for both the first and last acts is far less attractive, having a toy-town atmosphere that would be more suitable for a puppet play. The costumes are well-cut, and I very much liked the use of the slightly longer Romantic tutu for the girls.

Rambert's production of *Giselle* has now been famous for ten years, and revolutionised people's ideas on the ballet. *Coppélia* does not offer the same challenge to the producer as *Giselle*, but Rambert has managed to leave her signature on it with many original touches, particularly in her charming realisation of the second act.

To be successful *Coppélia* needs a first rate soubrette dancer in the rôle of Swanilda, and this the company found in their guest artist, Violette Verdy. Her dancing had an unforced *joie de vivre* and carefully detailed finish. That she sparkled rather than scintillated was in keeping with the performance as a whole, which scored its effect through clear brightness instead of brilliance.

FANTASTIC WORKSHOP: Verdy (left), as Swanilda, in Doboujinsky's delightful second act décor for the Rambert Coppélia. *Photo: John Chesworth*

Norman Dixon made a commendably straightforward Frantz, amusing and human. His last act variation made up in musicality and bravura what it lacked in sheer technical aplomb. The surprise of the performance proved to be Norman Morrice's carefully thought out portrayal of Dr. Coppelius, which achieved humour without being grotesque, and had a touch of the sinister yet did not sink into melodrama.

The divertissements in the last act were given with spirit. Ann Horn looked suitably radiant in the dreary Prayer variation, and Lucette Aldous had an instant success in her London début with her precise and well-formed dancing as Dawn.

Two Giselles

THE Rambert production of *Giselle*, its beautifully evocative Hugh Stevenson sets undimmed by time and touring, made its first appearance for the season on August 4. It has been refurbished with new costumes, made to the old Stevenson designs, the materials for which were the gift of Horrockses.

There are two valid styles of interpretation possible for the dancer approaching the rôle of Giselle, and, for the most part, all portrayals fall into one or other of these two general categories. The first might be called the mystical, has Markova as its patron-goddess, and, at its best, possesses the advantage of recalling the romantic atmosphere and period style of 19th century lithographs. The second is more realistic and robust, its principal exponent is Ulanova, and it carries with it greater dramatic conviction.

The season saw two Giselles—almost the only cast changes of the fortnight—and each in her way was almost an exemplum of the two methods. Violette Verdy, making her very first appearance in the part, chose the more realistic road. Her portrayal was danced with *brio*, and the character in the first act clearly delineated. Her second act suffered from an apparent lack of rehearsal, but in its luminous brightness was the promise of a more than fine Giselle to come.

The second Giselle, Ann Horn, who danced the part on the following night, more closely conformed to the Markova conception of the rôle, and thus provided an interesting contrast with Verdy. She is nowhere near so strong a dancer as her French colleague, yet her performances nearly always have distinction and a quality individual to themselves. As Giselle, a portrayal I have seen before but not, I think, in central London, she showed a delicacy of technique and a nicety of period style. There was none of the lightly scored but still definable peasant passion seen with Verdy, and her mad scene was touching more by its restraint than its histrionics, but the sweet grace of her personality made it a performance hardly less promising than the accomplished Verdy's.

Albrecht to both Giselles—can perfidy be carried further?—was the hard-working Norman Dixon. He partnered both his charges with exemplary directness, and his acting was, as is usual, unforced and fluent. Since I first saw him as Albrecht, he has learnt better the lesson that Helpmann once knew to perfection, of how to cover up his deficiencies of classical technique. But his classical dancing in the second still remained a blemish on an otherwise interesting performance.

What is it that Madame Rambert says to her Myrthes that make them flash into the ballet like avenging furies? Whatever it is I wish she could be persuaded to say it to dancers of other companies, for she, and she alone, has had a string of successes in this rôle. Its latest incumbent, Gillian Martlew, is quite possibly its best, for she dances the part with more clarity and vigour than any of her predecessors.

Lucette Aldous once again showed her worth in the peasant *pas de deux*, but her partner Ian Metsis was strangely untidy, and almost belied the good impression he made in his other parts during the season.

Tudor restoration

GORE'S *Simple Symphony*, with its strongly patterned choreography, robustious breadth of movement, and sympathy with its Britten music, retains an honourable place in the repertory. I must say, however, that the colours of Ronald Wilson's décor and costumes are looking rather faded, although it was pleasant to see that the boy in the blue sweater has regained the hat he lost a few seasons ago. The performance, led by Horn, Dixon, Martlew and Chesworth, was attractively danced. The third Gore ballet in the repertory,

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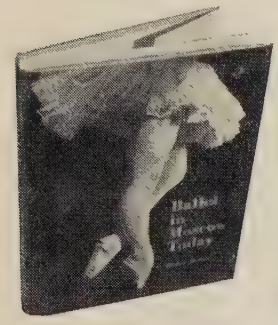

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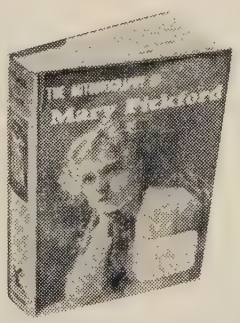

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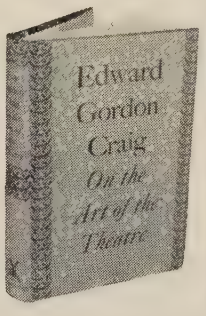

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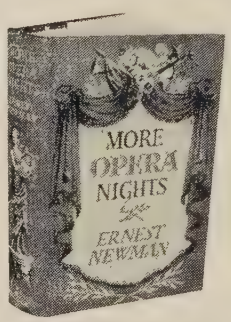

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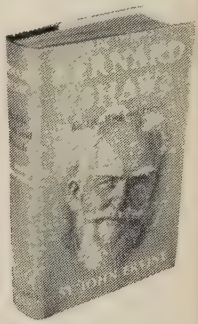

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Plaisance, I unfortunately missed, but I am assured by many who did see it, that the ballet was excellently staged, with Metsis outstanding in the Gilpin rôle.

For me the event of the season was the restoration to the repertory of Tudor's great ballet *Dark Elegies*. This ritualistic dance setting of Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* is one of the high-water marks of British ballet. Its nobility, dignity and humanity find their expression in choreography of the utmost simplicity. The spare reticence of the dancing, with its undertow of grief, despair and finally resignation is, in a good performance, infinitely moving. Classic in feeling, folksy in mood, the ballet has complete integrity. It is a work that the Covent Garden repertory is much the poorer for not possessing, and one wonders how much longer Tudor is to be *persona non grata* with our national company.

The company, led by Martlew, Horn, Chesworth, Dixon and Dyer gave it a positively devoted revival. I was especially impressed by Horn's dignity, and Dixon's ferocious burst of uncontrollable sorrow in the third song. One minor, but not too minor, point, the ballet's title is *Dark Elegies*, not, as printed on the programme, *The Dark Elegies*. This company has a bad reputation with definite articles, I still recall it billing *The Gala Performance*.

I would certainly not claim that MacMillan's *Laiderette* is of the same stature as *Dark Elegies*, yet it, too in its way, is a remarkably distinguished piece. Its fantastic theme involving a bald heroine has weaknesses inherent in its imaginative strength, yet there is a shaft of poetry in its bitter moral that only the beautiful can be loved, that makes itself felt in the heady, mysterious atmosphere of the ballet. The ascetically sensuous, almost saint-like, music of Frank Martin, and Kenneth Rowell's crepuscular Gallic setting, are fused with choreography of telling sensitivity. Considering how well the various elements are bound together, it is perhaps illuminating to remember that the music (Martin's *Petite Symphonie Concertante*) came first, the choreography came next, and the décor and costumes were added subsequently when the ballet, first produced by the Sadler's Wells Choreographic Group, was produced *chez* Rambert.

Patricia Ashworth, an improved dancer, has extended the range of her performance as Laiderette, although perhaps in the final analysis it no more effaces the memory of Maryon Lane in the part, than does John Chesworth's somewhat one-dimensional playing of the Host replace David Poole's original portrayal.

The repertory was completed with Ashton's *Façade*—the original version, in which Dixon and Morrice were outstanding in the Popular Song, and Dyer made a cute Milkmaid.

Clive Barnes

DOLIN AS THE MOOR: When Anton Dolin was a member of the Diaghilev Ballet he played the rôle of the Blackamoor in Fokine's Petrushka *many times. In fact, during the latter period of the Diaghilev company, he was the rôle's best interpreter. He has not played this part since the war, though he has appeared in the title rôle. During Festival Ballet's recent season, again playing the exotic and dusky character who entrances the Ballerina, he restored many touches which have been lost in recent years. Photo: Jeffrey Kovel*

FESTIVAL BALLET AT FESTIVAL HALL

IT was about five years ago that David Lichine's caravan first rested with Festival Ballet. He produced three or four ballets and, as appears to be his wont, passed on. He has now resumed some connection with the company, starting with his re-mounting of *Graduation Ball*. He is also scheduled to prepare the company's Christmas production of *The Nutcracker*, in collaboration with Alexander Benois. In between these two assignments he has choreographed for the company's Paris season last summer a new—or rather, newish—ballet:

CONCERTI

First produced in London by London's Festival Ballet at the Royal Festival Hall on July 22. Idea and Choreography by David Lichine. Music by Marcello and Vivaldi.

Cast

MARILYN BURR MICHAEL HOGAN
JANET OVERTON, PAMELA HART,
ANNE ROWSE, MARY DUCHESNE,
KEITH BECKETT, JEFFREY KOVEL,
RONALD EMBLEN, DONALD McALPINE
ANITA LANDA LOUIS GODFREY

WHAT a lot of damage has unwittingly been done by Ashton and Balanchine! They have made it appear so simple to produce plotless choreography, that many of their colleagues have attempted to jump on to their band-wagon without possessing the requisite tickets, which are musicality and inventiveness.

When Lichine first had his "idea"—which was apparently so striking that it has for evermore been duly put to his credit on the programme—an idea to do a ballet to Vivaldi's Concerto Grosso in D minor, he appears to have conceived it along somewhat Balanchinian lines. The beginning is not altogether unreminiscent of the opening of *Serenade*, and the ballet's choreographic texture has something in common with *Concerto Barocco*. But unfortunately Balanchine's feeling for Bach has not been equalled by Lichine's feeling for Vivaldi. Lichine's idea of "musical" choreography is all too frequently to set his dancers monotonously beating out the music's rhythm, and the resulting *Concerto Grosso en Ballet* was undistinguished to the point of pedestrianism.

The ballet held its place, on and off, for a year or so in the repertory, after which it faded from sight. Now Lichine has revived it and made it the second half of his newish ballet *Concerti*. The new part Lichine has fitted to a Concerto in C minor for oboe and strings by Marcello. By an interesting coincidence just as the beginning of the second concerto bore a faint resemblance to the opening of *Serenade*, so the ending of his new first concerto bears an equally faint resemblance to the closing of *Serenade*, and this provides for the faithful a fortuitous but fortunate link between the two halves.

Although *Concerti* points the old moral about two wrongs never making a right, outside its moral lesson I did not find it particularly valuable, even though it was extremely well danced. How well Festival Ballet with its vitality and lively discipline would probably dance in a Balanchine ballet! *Symphony in C* or *Bourrée Fantasque* ought to fit them perfectly.

As it was the dancers made the best of *Concerti*. Marilyn Burr, soundly partnered by Michael Hogan, performed a difficult *pas de deux* in the Marcello uncommonly well. Anita Landa, in the part created for Riabouchinska and first danced in London by Belinda Wright, also had a personal success. I was a little less happy with Louis Godfrey, who appeared to be making heavy going of Gilpin's old part in the Vivaldi, but his assignment was not an enviable one.

A VISITOR FROM PARIS

FESTIVAL BALLET certainly believe in giving their customers value for their money—an endearing trait which should be far more general in ballet. For example, not content with the première of *Concerti*, the management also included in the same programme the first performance with the company of their guest star Liane Daydé.

Daydé is one of the *étoiles* of the Paris Opéra, and although she had previously danced in England with her parent company, this was our first chance of assessing her in any of the standard classics. The ballet chosen for her début was *Giselle*. She is a very tiny dancer, with a rather short neck, long arms and a prettily plump face. Her technique is strong, particularly in turns, but her movements have a somewhat meagre quality, the more emphasised by the openness of Festival Ballet's own dance style. Her dancing seemed affected and provincial; there was a tendency for her to hunch her shoulders and poke her head forward which was inelegant, while her *ports de bras* were stiff and lacking in eloquence. On the credit side must be placed her acting ability and the care and thought—presumably

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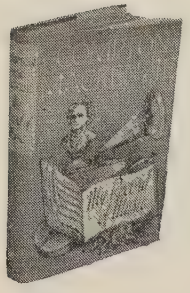

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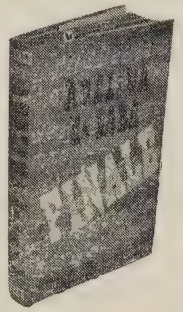

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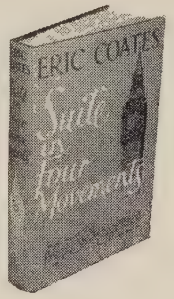

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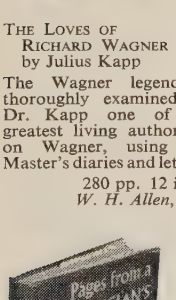

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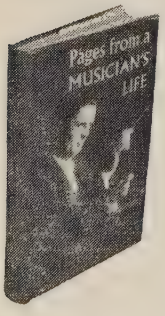

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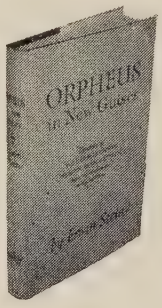

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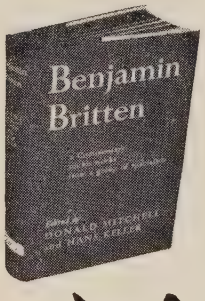

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INSIDE NO. 1

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under Lifar's tutelage—she had given to the rôle.

Gilpin partnered her with understanding and elegance, but even his courtesy could not prevent his brilliant dancing from overshadowing her in the second act. Gilpin still goes through the motions of acting Albrecht most punctiliously—yet they do not always carry complete conviction. As a result he is a fine Albrecht more in the Eglevsky manner than the Dolin.

Daydé was seen to much better advantage when on July 25 she danced the second act of *The Nutcracker*, also partnered by Gilpin. It was not an official press night, and she seemed more at ease with herself and with the company. Her strong thrusting technique enabled one to forget her unsympathetic style of dancing, and her exuberant and altogether charming stage manners were a delight. She seemed the embodiment of Tudor's giddy French ballerina in *Gala Performance*, and the obvious pleasure she took in her audience I found infectious and beguiling.

On August 22 the company revived their production of *Petrushka*. As the Fokine ballets were at one time a corner-stone in the company's repertory, it is rather sad to note that this and *Les Sylphides* are the only Fokine ballets in the current repertory. The present *Petrushka* now has its production accredited once more to Nicholas Beriosoff, after an interval during which it had been the responsibility of Serge Grigoriev and Luibov Tchernicheva.

Festival Ballet was, of course, the first English company to mount *Petrushka*, and in the early days it received some notable performances, particularly from Massine and Chauviré. Now, ungratefully, we set about comparing it with the sumptuous version of the ballet recently produced at Covent Garden, which with its faults is still on a scale which the resources of Festival Ballet could not hope to rival.

Today Festival Ballet's scenery looks tatty and insubstantial, and the fairground seems depopulated. The production itself has also been in better shape. And who on earth dreamed up the idea of introducing a contraption that looks like a cross between a roulette wheel and a dart-board into the fairground scene?

However it was most rewarding to see Dolin dance the Moor, for the first time in England since before the war. While he has not now got the panther-like spring the part demands, his magnificently sensual interpretation of the rôle was splendidly authoritative. Also authoritative was the guest appearance of Nicholas Beriosoff as a querulous Charlatan, while Anita Landa was effective as the Doll. Unhappily Keith Beckett's Petrushka failed to justify the hopes we once had for him in this rôle. Possibly he is finding the readjustment from musicals into the discipline of a ballet company difficult at the moment, but for whatever reason, at present his Petrushka appears to be flabbily characterised and weakly danced.

It was pleasant to welcome Natalie Krassovska back into the company fold, but the part of Taglioni in Dolin's *The Pas de Quatre* hardly showed her at her best. Unless you can put out an all-star cast in this ballet, I wonder seriously whether it is worth doing. When Festival Ballet cast it from among Markova, Danilova, Krassovska, Riabouchinska and Slavenska—then it was a gem.

Another revival of the evening, this time happier, was Dolin's slight but agreeable *Pas de Deux Romantique*, *Harlequinade*. In the sudden absence of Belinda Wright—who has now temporarily left the company—the part of Columbine was filled at short notice by Noël Rossana. She did very well in the circumstances, dancing with a pert vivacity. Gilpin was more faultless than usual as Harlequin.

Clive Barnes

SO YOU WANT TO DANCE

continued from page 33

arranged in circles. But what the writer did not know, says Maria Zybina, was that Serbian dances are always performed in circles because during their long struggle for liberation against the Turks they were chained together by the hands and travelled as slaves. But nothing could conquer their pride, and when they were perhaps saddest they used to sing and dance around and around in circles, as they could not do otherwise. The national dances are called *Kolo*, which means circle, or wheel. And again, some of the Yugoslav dances which she has taught pupils have been criticised here as being too vigorous and temperamental and, therefore, unsuitable for the stage.

"I am well aware," she says, "that amateurs enjoying themselves enormously may seem enchanting in the village square, but if the same steps and patterns repeat themselves *ad infinitum* the very same dances may appear dull or rather too naive when transplanted to the stage. I have often found myself that some dances are too delicate and simple to be taken out of their surroundings. But any folk dance company needs as varied programmes as it can possibly assemble."

"How far, then," she asks, "is it permissible to alter or adapt national dances for the stage?"

"It is," she says, "all a question of good taste, knowledge and common sense." If a dance is an authentic reproduction, and its steps are sufficiently interesting to please audiences who are interested mainly in theatrical effect, it is naturally far better left as it is. But, she says, most national dances are suitable for the stage. One can make them either elaborate or simple, depending on the talents of the pupils or dancers, providing one is sure of the basic movements and range of steps in a particular dance. But the more vivid the imagination and the more varied and comprehensive a knowledge of steps and authentic rhythms which a choreographer or teacher possesses, then are adaptations possible without losing the original qualities.

Referring to the recent production of *Petrushka*, she wonders whether Grigoriev found it difficult to explain the behaviour and background of the Russian nursemaids and coachmen to the dancers, because she considers that they were very poorly interpreted. "Dancers," she concludes, "must not put on their characterizations with their costumes and make-up. Even in practice clothes you must be able to tell that they are coachmen."

She has taught at the Judith Espinosa School and at the International Ballet School. Now she is teaching at Kathleen Crofton's studio, in addition to teaching at the school she opened in Beckenham in 1950.

SPANISH DANCE: Owing to shortage of space it has been impossible to include the reviews of the two Spanish companies which recently appeared in London—the Pilar Lopez Ballet Español and the Ximenez-Vargas Ballet Español. Both will be fully reviewed, with special photographs by Roy Round, in the November issue.

Ballet Dates

(NOTE: Whatever day the mid-week matinee falls on, the matinees and evening performances will then be *Solitaire* and *Giselle*; the announced programme will be substituted on Thursday.)

THE ROYAL BALLET
(formerly Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet)

Sept.
16 The Hippodrome, Golder's Green
23 The New Theatre, Cardiff
30 The Hippodrome, Bristol
Oct.
7 The New Theatre, Oxford
14 The Opera House, Manchester
21 The Kings Theatre, Edinburgh
28 His Majesty's, Aberdeen
Nov.
4 The Kings Theatre, Glasgow
11 The Grand Theatre, Leeds
18 The Lyceum, Sheffield
25 New Theatre, Hull
Dec.
26 The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden (performances on Jan. 1, 2, 4, 10, 11, 16, 18)

Tour programmes for each town.
Mon. *Les Sylphides, House of Birds, Pineapple Poll*
Tues. *Les Patineurs, La Fête Etrange, Blood Wedding*
Wed. *Les Sylphides, House of Birds, Pineapple Poll*
Thurs. *Solitaire, Giselle*
Fri. *Les Patineurs, La Fête Etrange, Blood Wedding*
Sat. (M & E) *Coppélia*

FESTIVAL BALLET
Oct.
7 The Coventry Theatre, Coventry
14 The Pavilion, Bournemouth
21 The Palace, Plymouth
28 The Hippodrome, Bristol
Nov.
4 The Empire, Sheffield
11 The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham
18 The Palace, Manchester (2 weeks)
Dec.
2 The Hippodrome, Brighton
24 The Royal Festival Hall, London (3 weeks)

BALLET RAMBERT
Nov.
18 The City Hall, Cork
25 The Gaiety Theatre, Dublin
Jan.
20 Arts Council tour of Scotland (4 weeks)
Feb.
17 The Little Theatre, Middlesborough

(These dates are subject to alteration.)

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23 Kings Theatre, Edinburgh
30 The Lyceum, Sheffield
Oct.
7 The Royal Court, Liverpool
14 The Grand Theatre, Leeds

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at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, London
Oct. 21 for three weeks.

Nov. **Provincial Tour**
11 Royal Court Theatre, Liverpool
18 The King's Theatre, Glasgow
25 The Opera House, Manchester
Dec.
2 The Grand Theatre, Leeds
9 The Memorial Theatre, Stratford-on-Avon
16 Gaiety Theatre, Dublin

THE URAL STATE ENSEMBLE
at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, London
Nov. 11 for three weeks.

HELD OVER
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A Dancer from the ROYAL BALLET
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on the front cover of DANCE AND DANCERS.

INSIDE: Dancing at the Festival in Moscow by MICHAEL KULLMANN. The Edinburgh Festival by NOEL GOODWIN. Creations in Munich by STUART BARKER. All these articles are illustrated by many new pictures.

JOSE LIMON, an illustrated review of his first London season. PILAR LOPEZ and the XIMENEZ-VARGAS Spanish companies, fully reviewed and with a portfolio of new pictures by ROY ROUND.

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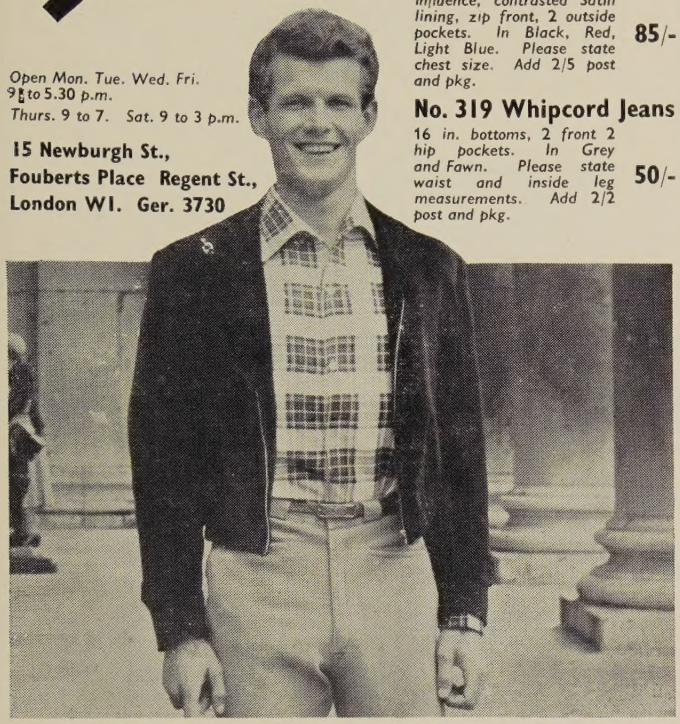

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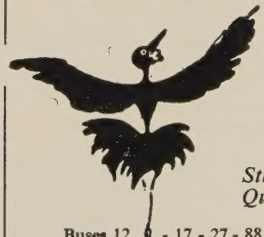

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HARLEQUIN PRINT
French printed harlequin cotton, many colours and designs, 36" wide, 4/11 per yard

CHIFFON GEORGETTE
All colours, 36" wide, 5/11 per yard

FRENCH BROCADE
Lamé, all colours. Very latest, 36" wide, 25/– per yard

VELVETEEN
27" wide 8/11 per yard
36" wide 12/11 per yard

TUBULAR JERSEY WOOL
54" wide **18/11 per yard**

TUBULAR JERSEY
½" stripe, red/white, navy/white, 63" wide, 5/11 per yard

RAYON JERSEY
All colours. 54" wide, 7/11 per yard

FELT
Large range of colours
72" wide 19/11 per yard

TEDDY BEAR MATERIAL
Many colours
46" wide 21/– per yard

SATEEN—Many colours
40" wide 3/11 per yard
54" wide 4/11 per yard

ELASTIC STRETCH SATIN
MANY COLOURS AVAILABLE
Ideal for LEOTARDS, STRAPLESS TOPS, ETC.
38in wide **35/–** per yard

SEQUINS
EXTENSIVE RANGE OF COLOURS
In packets of approx. 500 pieces of any one colour. Sizes ¼", 1/6 per packet; ⅜", 8/– per packet; 1" Flats, 5/– per 100; Cup SEQUINS, ¼", 2/3 per packet of 500
Star Shape 2/6 for 50
Leaf Shape 3/6 for 100
Both patterns approx. 1"

GLITTER DUST
Spangle your own Tarlatan, etc. Glorious range of colours, 1oz envelopes, 2/6.

SEQUASTICK (trade mark).
For applying sequins, glitter dust, rhinestones, etc., 6d. per tube
When ordering Glitter Dust and/or Sequins only please enclose 6d. for postage

SEQUINS
RHINESTONES
ARTIFICIAL FLOWERS
RIBBONS, CORDS & BRAIDS
LEOTARDS & TIGHTS
SEND for these PRICE LISTS

FLUORESCENT MATERIALS
Suitable for U.V. or any form of stage lighting
36in wide
TARLATAN 3/6
TAFFETA 3/11 per yard
SATIN 5/11
Large Range of Colours in Stock

WOOLLEN JERSEY LEOTARDS & TIGHTS
Unlimited range of colours
STOCKED AND MADE TO MEASURE
PRICES ON APPLICATION

"CAPRICETTE"
PERLON BIKINI
TWO-WAY STRETCH
BLACK, WHITE & FLESH
33/6 per pair

JOCK STRAP, LADIES
Special lined cotton back satin with elastic sides
Flesh **14/11**

THEATRICAL SUPPORT MEN'S
Black or White **22/6**

SUSPENDER BELT
Specially tailored Belt with 6 suspenders for Opera Hose, etc.
Flesh only **10/11**

"G" STRING 6/11 Flesh only
Elastic belt with nylon string

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